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Mr. GUYSE's
LETTER

To the Reverend
Mr. CHANDLER.

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THE
BRITISH
MUSEUM



(1851-1852)

The Scripture-notion of preaching Christ
further clear'd and vindicated:

I N A
L E T T E R

To the Reverend

Mr. Samuel Chandler,

In Answer to

One from him to the Author,

In which

Mr. Chandler's charitable Temper, his Treatment of sacred Things, his Misrepresentations, his Notion of preaching Christ, and his Charge of Uncharitableness, &c. are consider'd.

By JOHN GUYSE. *h*

The servant of the Lord must not strive; but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient, in meekness instructing those that oppose themselves; if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth. 2 Tim. ii. 24, 25.

L O N D O N:

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The Science of breeding
Animals and vegetables

LETTER

To the Honorable

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In Answer to

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ERRATUM

PAG. 2. Lin. 7. for year read *the*.

BY JOHN GUY

LONDON

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the University of Cambridge, and
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the University of Cambridge.

A
L E T T E R
 T O

The Reverend Mr. Samuel Chandler.

Reverend Sir,

WHEN I preach'd and publish'd
 the sermons you have so freely
 censured in your Letter to me,
 I had no thought of offending;
 and was afterward much sur-
 priz'd to hear, that any of my brethren had taken
 offence at some passages about the too great
 neglect of preaching Christ. As soon as oppor-
 tunity offer'd, I desir'd some of my friends to tell
 any they might meet with, that I did not aim at
 the support of any private party-cause, at any
 thing invidious, or at a reflexion upon any parti-
 cular person or party whatsoever; but that I had
 my thoughts upon the whole state of the chris-
 tian interest amongst us of this kingdom, in the
 passages excepted against; and that I deliver'd
 them merely from a serious concern, according
 to my sense of things for many years past, that
 B Christ

The Occasion and Design

Christ has been, comparatively speaking, but little preach'd as he ought to be, and from a sincere desire to fling in something that, by the blessing of God, might stir up my self and others to preach him more. And, as far as I am acquainted with my own heart, I can appeal to him, who knows all things, that this is the truth of ~~the~~ *the* case.

This, Sir, if I am not misinform'd, was particularly reported to you; but it could not appease your resentments, who, as if you thought your self more concern'd in what I had said than any one else, must, in all haste, animadvert upon it. Several, I have heard, earnestly desir'd you not to enter into a war against me, which might tend to inflame mens passions, and bring new disputes upon the stage, after we have had too many already. But all this could not divert you from your design; nor was you so kind as to speak or write one word to me, tho you had fair opportunities for it, that you might know what I had further to say for my self. To the press you resolv'd to go. I hope this forwardness of procedure was not because you thought you should otherwise lose the glory of a triumph. I confess I am at a loss to account for it to your advantage.

When I heard you was inflexibly bent upon publishing your remarks, I kept my self absolutely unresolv'd whether to reply or not, till I should see what you aim'd at; and was not without hope, that I should not be oblig'd to break thro' my habitual inclination for quietness and peace, or to offer violence to my temper and talents, by entering into a wrangling dispute, which I have always had an Abhorrence of. But when you sent me your printed Letter, I soon found my self forc'd into an unavoidable necessity of
making

making some reply; and as soon found my self no match for the spirit that runs thro' it. I can't return like for like, *railing for railing*; I hope I have learned, I am sure I desire to learn, better of the meek and humble Jesus, than *when I am reviled, to revile again*. And I am heartily sorry that facts speak a language more severe than I am willing to put into words.

I must own the Letter appears to me to be wrote with so much heat and indiscretion, and so little like a fair and close disputant, that there would be no pleasure, profit, or end of following you thro' all your numerous repetitions, declamations, wandrings, tartnesses, and confus'd mixture of things, utterly foreign to the cause depending between us. You have cast up such heaps of rubbish, almost in every place, I suppose to cover your principal batteries, and make them as inaccessible as you could, that one must have the toil of a pioneer before they can be attack'd in form. I'll however try to remove a good deal of this out of the way, that we may the better come at your professed design, and keep to it with less interruption. I shall therefore, as God shall help me,

First, Endeavour to disburden the main argument of several things that every where incumber it, and ought to have nothing to do with it: And then proceed to what you have said about the principal subjects, which are, *your enquiry into my account of preaching Christ, and my charges, as you call them, against my brethren*.

In managing the first of these designs, I found it necessary to throw your thoughts, as well as I could collect and distinguish them, under the following heads or classes, viz. *Your charitable, christian temper toward your brethren, your unbecoming treatment of sacred things, and your misrepresentations*. I

Mr. Chandler's charitable

might have added a head of your *inconsistencies*, but shall content my self with pointing some of them out, thro' the whole of your Letter, as we go along. And when I have said what may be proper on these heads, we shall proceed to your professed and principal articles: But I must take leave so far to break in upon the form of a Letter, as to sling all the heads, of both the preparatory and principal work, into so many *sections* for the benefit of the reader.

It has cost me no small time and pains to make a proper sortment of these out of your huddling method, if I may call it a method. And after all, it was impossible to give some things their most proper place, because they are so complicated, that they might be equally rang'd under more classes than one. This will sometimes make it necessary for me to take notice of them as such, that I may not have the trouble of going over them again under the other heads, to which they might be referr'd. Some indeed can't but be mention'd more than once with different views. But you have so cloy'd me with repetitions, that I shall endeavour to avoid them as much as may be.

Well, let us begin with your darling topick.

S E C T. I.

First, *Your charitable christian temper towards your brethren.*

THIS is what you make high pretences to; and who cou'd have thought but it wou'd have shone thro' every page? I cou'd surely expect no less, when I heard you should say before-hand, you was resolv'd to treat me with decency, and to leave out every thing that

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that might seem severe against me. Upon this, I expected a specimen of all the goodness, meekness and charity, you was able to write with; and so perhaps it is, especially when you have to do with a *friend* to the christian religion, who is in a *different*, way of thinking from your self about some of its peculiar doctrines. But, when I came to see the spirit of the letter, I wonder'd, I pitied you, I pray'd for you, and, I hope, sincerely forgave you; I griev'd and mourn'd to think, whither such a spirit as this wou'd carry us, and what mischief and confusion it is like to revive and propagate amongst us: and did not justice to the cause of truth and charity, as well as to my own character, require it, shou'd never have mention'd it to you, or to the world, but have let it sink under the contempt that silence wou'd have thrown upon it.

You enter upon your design with professions of *a tender regard for the reputation and character of all good men and faithful ministers; and call your remarks, friendly animadversions: You wind them up with a like air of good will; You think your self* pag. 2.
incapable of wishing me any thing but good; and don't bear any prejudice to me, or any of my friends; but have ever had a real value for me; and you pag. 91.
hope you shall to the last day of your life increase in charity, which is the true image of the best of beings. pag. 89.

Now let us see how well your way of treating me, and my friends, answers all these fine words.

You wou'd fain surprise the world into a belief, that I, *who at Hertford maintain'd the character of a sober and moderate preacher, have at London set up for the warm head of a party, and enter'd into low methods to maintain and support it. What that party is, except Christ's party, I don't understand.* pag. 13.

derstand. I assure you, Sir, I value all parties as far as they are for him; and value none any further than I apprehend them to be so. And it has long been my hearty wish, that no other distinction might reign among us, than who is *for*, and who is *against* him. I detest the lower views of *every* party, and never thought my self fit to be the *head* of any of them; or that 'tis worth any man's while to enter into any *low methods* to support even the cause of Christ itself, which is too good and glorious to need them. Your *latin* motto in the title page breathes the same spirit with still greater force, and is so much more exceptionable, that I think it was the master-piece of your prudence not to translate it. You might well apprehend, that the generality of *English* readers would have thought it too bare-fac'd, had it appear'd in their own language.

You have hereby put into my hands as fair an opportunity to recriminate, as an ill natur'd mind wou'd wish for. But you shall not rob me of a pleasure, much more noble than that of a reprisal. I shall only say, what I think necessary to guard against the melancholy tendency of your Essay, that I am very sorry Mr. *Chandler* shou'd catch at an opportunity of making a party business of what I innocently design'd; and shall leave the world to judge, whether he has not a mind to try if he can set himself at the head of a party, that shall run down the good old *protestant* and *apostolick* way of *preaching Christ*. But when I have taken off your abuses, and set the main cause between us in as clear a light as I can, then I intend to leave it, and not to pull one end of the saw of contention with a gentleman, whose warmth and resentment seem

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seem to dispose him too much for a party-quarrel.

You are so very complaisant, as to suppose me to mean, that quarrelling, and blaspheming the name of Christ, are in all conversations, but such as I have the management of my self. And, with an air of disdain, say, that I have not the honour to be present in many conversations, which are guided by friendship and decency; and that since I have commenc'd a London divine, you are apt to think I know nothing of the sentiments and temper of many, and but little of any of them, besides the few of my own party. What a rare qualification is this for the warm head of a party!

I am further set out as bordering upon wrath, variance, emulation, censoriousness and hasty judging the servants and ministers of Christ; as introducing my sermon with a railing accusation against others, and openly pronouncing hard and rash censures of my brethren in the solemn assembly, and propagating them for the publick edification; as using the name of Christ as a by-name for scandal and party: As setting up for a restrictive preacher of Christ, and using this expression of preaching Christ, to keep up animosities and divisions amongst the members of his church; as acting contrary to that noble principle of charity, which is greater than faith, and without which I am, with all my zeal, no more than as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal; and as preaching scandal, instead of the gospel of Christ: As chargeable with the Devil's character, the accuser of the brethren; as ransacking their very hearts and souls; as carried by an intemperate furious zeal beyond the bounds of charity and justice: as throwing out the bitterest charges against the greatest numbers of the ministers of Christ, and being guilty of so cruel a conduct, as deserves some publick animadversion.

At

At other times, I am represented as if I us'd set
forms of speech, for no other purpose, but to support the
 pag. 47. *reputation of orthodoxy, and to be the Shibboleth of*
 pag. 73. *a Party; as if the excellency of my faith consists in*
 pag. 13. *believing without, or contrary to reason; as if I acted*
a part in my sermons under an apprehension that
it would be pleasing to my patron, as you call Mr.
 pag. 87. *Coward; as if I thought the spirit of God resides*
wholly with me, and that Christ has forsaken other
 pag. 82. *christian assemblies wholly to rest on mine; as if I*
fish for a reputation and character at the expence of
others, and endeavour to make myself popular by assu-
ming to myself the sole honour of preaching Christ, and
 pag. 90. *representing others as scandalously deficient in it, or wil-*
fully despising it; and as if by my exclamations,
and groans, and sad outcries against other ministers, I
intended to thin their congregations. How charitable
all this is, appears by a bare recital; and how
just, will be seen before we have done.

On this occasion, as well as others, you can't
 tell how to suppress, what I should be glad to
 say did not look something like your envy at the
 little success God has favour'd me with; and add
 with a meanness of spirit, that I can't but pity,
 You may possibly be deceived in your hopes (of thinning
 the congregations of others.) Methinks the run of
 success, and the crouded auditory you have had—
 might make you contented and easy. If I might be of
 your council, I should advise you, to be thankful to God
 for your own usefulness, and not to envy others theirs;
 and withal to be humble and easy, for your mountain is
 not so strong as to be incapable of being mov'd. I am
 very sensible that I am nothing, and all my hope
 lies in this, that Christ is all in all. But is this
 the language of one, that would to God my ministra-
 tions were successful according to the prayers and wishes
 of my heart? of one that wishes for an increase of my
 serviceableness, whether I preach Christ in the latitude,

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or restrictively, in my own church, or at Mr. Coward's lecture? or of one whose hearty prayer is, that I may go on and prosper, and that the work of the Lord may be succeeded in my hands? You pray, and do all you can to blast the prayer: you wish well, and can't conceal vexation at the thing you wish for. Unhappy man! what consistent, lovely charity is this!

At other times, with like consistency you seem afraid to own the very things you have evidently thrown upon me. *Supposing*, say you, *I should tell the world, that Mr. Guyle preach'd these two sermons with the sentiment and temper of a flatterer, and a man-pleaser, to gratify his patron, or with a view to heighten his own character for orthodoxy, or to draw a croud of hearers to his lecture, or to increase his auditory and subscriptions at his own church, or merely to serve a particular party he belongs to; would not the whole world deservedly censure me as acting a mean part, beneath and unworthy my character as a minister and a christian? I am sure honest and impartial men must condemn me.* And yet I appeal to all mankind, whether you have not represented me under most of those odious characters, in several passages above recited; out of your own mouth then you are condemned. I need pass no other censure, than you have here pass'd upon your self: look back upon it, and I hope you will lie humble before God and man, for doing the very thing, of which you say, supposing you shou'd do it, wou'd not the whole world deservedly censure you, as acting a mean part, beneath and unworthy your character as a minister and a christian? Nay more than that, you are sure honest and impartial men must condemn you for it.

My sincerity seems to be brought into suspicion, when you insinuate as if I *express my self* pag. 46. *in such a manner, as may give occasion to any to take*

C

me

pag. 63. *me in one sense, whilst at the same time I have another to my self. And yet the expressions there complained of, are, I think, more determinate, and express my sense much better, than those you wou'd put into my mouth in their stead. I am weary of transcribing out of the numerous reproaches that defile almost every page: I am sure, to use some of the softest of your words to me, these charges neither become you as a man or a christian. What impressions they may make on the minds of strangers, I cannot say; but I trust, by the grace of God, I have hitherto lived, and am determined, by the same grace, still to live at such a rate, that none that know me, and are not uncharitably prejudic'd against me, can or shall believe them.*

pag. 66. *You often in a most indecent manner, droll upon the church I belong to, and take one of those occasions to bring in a very unworthy suggestion, that tends to raise a groundless jealousy in their minds about me; and at the close of it you put them upon questioning my soundness in the faith, and demanding some explication of it. But notwithstanding your attempt to create a misunderstanding, and the mean flirts you here and elsewhere throw out against them as well as me, without a cause; it is my great happiness, that there is a lovely harmony in principle and spirit between us, which you are not able to disturb; and that they know my sentiments on the points referred to, and have empower'd me to declare to the world, that they are intirely satisfied, and at full agreement with me in them, clear of all extremes of *Antinomianism* on one hand, and *Arminianism* on the other. I take them to be a set of very serious christians, who think it their highest honour to approve themselves to God and their own consciences in their principles and*

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and conduct. They despise your reproaches, and I make no doubt, will nevertheless, by the grace of God, stand with reputation in the account of the churches all around them. But I shan't disgrace you so far as to transcribe your unbecoming reflections upon them.

But if your insinuations shou'd not succeed to injure me with my own people, you will try what can be done, in a more open way, to inflame the passions of ministers and people in general, and raise their indignation. A great part of your discourse is declamation, straining and exaggerating every thing, to spirit them up against me, as if I were a common enemy: I shall only give one specimen of this, and that is where you cry out, with incensing exclamation, *Awake, pag. 71, oh all ye apostate clergy, ye unbelieving ministers and hearers, hear the dreadful charge against you, and tremble! You have waved, banished, and despised every thing restrictively christian, every thing peculiar to Christ, if the representation and charge of the reverend Mr. Guyse is true: a charge brought against you in the face of the whole world, a charge solemnly deliver'd in the name of God, and again and again repeated, that the few christians who are left may understand and mourn your apostacy. The justice of this representation will be consider'd hereafter. But pray, Sir, what is this better, than painting me out in some of the most hideous colours that a satyrical fancy can lay, on purpose to fill the world with strong resentment, and awaken a general run against me as the most obnoxious man that ever liv'd? I almost tremble when I think what an impetuous and injurious spirit is here!*

But you move the tender as well as rougher passions of my mind; you awaken all my pity toward you, with my horror at your words, when you

pag. 61.

summon me over and over again to the awful judgment of God, to answer several charges you make me guilty of without ground : for this, I shall only desire the reader to consult your pages 35, 62, and 85. And even this is not enough ; but, in your excess of charity, you tell me, that if *I can't prove, either from their* (the greatest number of preachers) *publick performances, or private conversations, that they are so content as I imagine to lay aside Christ,*——— *I deserve a severer reproof than that of the Lord rebuke thee. i. e.* If I can't prove what I only say, *seems to be* *, and you interpret me to say, *is the case* ; and if I can't prove this in a way that the nature of things hardly ever admits of in like cases, where they are true ; if I can only prove it in a way that things of that kind use to be prov'd in, and that is generally allow'd to be as good proof, as a reasonable man can demand ; I deserve a severer reproof than the *Devil* himself. Is not this very candid, charitable, and ingenuous ? What ! do I deserve a severer reproof than that of *the Lord rebuke thee* ? I beseech you, Sir, what reproof is that ? Is it the reproof of the *whip, the pillory, and the gallows* in this world, which, Dr. Rogers says, you *very ingeniously recommended for his correction* †, and damnation in the next ? or is it a worse damnation than that of the devil himself ? Sure these things come with a very ill grace from the mouth of one, that talks so much of christian charity. Is this the charity that *you hope to increase in to the last day of your life* ? Was ever such uncharitableness

* See the sermons, 1st edit. p. 261. 2d edit. p. 81. It was thought proper, when Mr. Chandler's remarks came out, to print my two sermons by themselves ; and when I have occasion to refer to them, I shall mention the page in each edition, that such as have either of them may readily turn to it.

† *Vindication of the civil establishment of religion*, p. 6.

and

and severity, under a profess'd design of charity and friendship, heard of! I wou'd hope their charming sounds were never so unworthily prostituted before, nor ever will be again.

But, that you may not always seem to be on the uncharitable side, you put on an air of imitating the lovely Jesus, and will throw in a kind prayer for me and others of my brethren, *Father* pag. 86. *forgive them*; for we hope *they know not what they do*. A very charitable prayer indeed, as you have alter'd it! You insert the words, *we hope*, which seems to intimate, that you suspect whether we have the qualifying circumstance in our crime, which our blessed Lord mentioned, as the *only* circumstance, that made the persons he pray'd for capable of forgiveness, or proper objects for the divine mercy. How desperate must our case be, if we were to stand or fall by your charitable opinion of us! I assure you my charity goes much beyond yours; and I can heartily say, *Father forgive him*; for I believe *he knows not what he does*.

And what are all these hard speeches against me for? Why, only for my saying, if rightly understood (as I shall show hereafter) what there is too much reason to say; and what, on all proper occasions, has been said before, by some of the most serious and judicious divines of the establishment, and among the dissenters. When I reflect on this uncommon conduct of yours, I cannot help thinking of Solomon's words, *an angry man stirreth up strife, and a furious man aboundeth in transgression.* 22, 23. *A man's pride shall bring him low: but honour shall uphold the humble in spirit.* My sincere desire and prayer to God for you is, that you may be humbled, not for your destruction, but in order to your exaltation in all the glories of the christian principles and temper here, and of immortal blessedness hereafter.

After

After you have had the pleasure of saying what you list against me, you cannot be satisfy'd without spreading the reproach upon others; among which, one only can be so much as suppos'd to have any concernment in the offence you have taken at my sermons: Unhappy all they that have any thing to do with me, if your lash can make them so! I have already hinted the unmanly reflexions you have cast on the church, I am most immediately related to.

pag. 13.

Good Mr. Coward, as you call him more than once in a way of indecent slight, deserves another sort of treatment, than you have given him, for his generous views toward the common interest of our blessed Lord: His lecture, which is design'd for a direct, and immediate preaching of Christ in the whole compass of his characters, is ridicul'd as a design to *support a party*. I wonder what sort of brand you wou'd have fix'd upon the Lady Moyer's lecture, set up on purpose to preach directly and immediately on the *divinity* of Christ! I am asham'd of the indignities you have cast upon a venerable, aged gentleman for his great expence in a service, that the whole christian world must own to be truly honourable; and as if you cou'd show your good-will to preaching Christ no other way, you

pag. 52.

hope it will live and flourish, when Mr. Coward's name and lecture shall be no more. I fancy the specimen given of your charity in this letter, will never, as you ludicrously talk, recommend you to Mr. Coward, or any other good man, for a preacher of the *new law of love*.

pag. 13.

Mr. Hubbard comes next under your correction; he, in a way of burlesque, is represented as a *very fanciful preacher*—to a *very whimsical purpose*; and his moral character is traduc'd, as if the disposition of his mind were such, that *he*
needed

pag. 51.

needed Mr. Coward's contribution to engage him to preach Christ directly, and to seek to bring Christ into the souls of men. Who would not blush at these things! I make no doubt, but Mr. Hubbard is able to do himself justice against such an injurious charge.

All my fellow-labourers in the lecture must likewise be drawn in; they must have a dash for my sake. We are all said to have forgotten, or *waved, the great law of love*; and are shrewdly mark'd out, as *preaching Christ of envy, strife and contention*: The first of these will, in its place, be proved to be false; and the world will judge of the truth and decency of the last. pag. 13.

You go on to point out others of my brethren in the ministry with such pert contempt, as I think never can be justify'd in a young man, toward worthy ministers of their age and gravity, stations and valuable talents: you scornfully pag. 49. treat the reputable labours of one, and wou'd prejudice the world against them, whilst they are in the press: your banter upon another is with pag. 16. such an air of derision, that decency obliges me not to recite it. And that I may refer to it no more under other heads, to which it might be reduc'd, as well as to this, I shall only observe, that you have formed it with complicated abuse upon *him*, and upon *me*; and what is worst of all, upon the *types and figures of the Old Testament*. Upon *him*, amongst all those that can guess at the case you refer to; upon *me*, amongst all those that are, or hereafter may be, ignorant of that case, who, as you have brought it in, must suppose you meant me in it; and upon the *types and figures of the old testament*, as if they were all to be set on a level with what you there ridicule.

And

And to give a finish'd proof of your extensive charity, all *my dear friends*, as you call them, with an air of contempt, who think pretty much in my way about the great doctrines of the gospel, must bear a part in the reproach with me; tho none of them had any thing to do with you or me in the cause between us. They are
 pag. 49. all styl'd *orthodox to themselves*, and called upon to *assume the glorious character of infallibility*, and
 pag. 84. *publish their creed of orthodoxy*, for the better *regulating our faith and preaching for the future*: Their *tempers and sentiments*; their *eminent learning*, their *valuable writings*, their *stated sermons* are drolled upon, as *speaking their praises*, and as *deserving my best panegyrics on them*. They are involved in the
 pag. 85. character of *weak, partial, and peevish men*; and come in, as has been observ'd, for a share in your charitable prayer, *Father forgive them*; for, we hope, *they know not what they do*.

Yea, the whole body of ministers and christians, that were not on your side of the question in some late unhappy differences, are stigmatiz'd by a long roll of opprobrious characteristicks, as they stand in the *Shibboleth* of party-zeal for charity. I hope and believe all these terms of reproach are not deserv'd; tho none can doubt, but there have been more or less faults among some on both sides. But with you the whole load must be laid on one, and all
 pag. 88. the *spreading of infidelity*, the *declining of the cause of christianity*, and the *cold, low, and withering state of religion* (which on this occasion you are in humour to own may be matter of just complaint) must be thrown intirely upon what you suggest concerning them, rather than have it allow'd, that there is any neglect of preaching Christ, to contribute towards it. And all this must be set out in such a way, as may lead an apprehension,

hension, that I had a hand in what I never had any thing to do with. I am grieved to see such keenness and contempt, as in this and several other places run out against them, whom with great consistency of temper, you own for christian brethren. You sometimes say, you *cou'd join* pag. 86. *in sweet communion with them; and have the pleasure to think you shall one day meet them in a happier state.* pag. 94. And yet, as far as I can judge by comparing your way of writing in this and other controversies, you seem dispos'd to deal more favourably with the open enemies of christianity, than with them, who contend earnestly for the faith, which, they are fully persuaded, was once deliver'd to the saints. Let me here remind you of your tenderness to the *deists*, which certainly ought to have been us'd to your christian brethren. To one of that fraternity you say, *Tho I charge this writer with several gross immoralities upon account of the manner of his writing; yet I am far from fixing the like charge of immorality upon others, merely because they have not the same honourable sentiments of christianity with those, who see reason to believe it, as has been too often, and I think unfairly, done. Nothing is more unjust than that the vices of particular men in any body or society, should be charg'd on the whole. Christians would not like such a treatment from others, and they shou'd therefore be as sparing in giving it, as they would be unwilling to receive it.** Why then shou'd the foibles of some of your christian brethren be charg'd in the lump upon their community?

Is marking out their whole body by distinguishing badges of reproach your way of showing charity, in order to recommend it? Was ever any man in the world so unhappy in assuming

* *Vindication of the christian religion, pag. 156.*

pag. 91.

to himself the glory of a *Name*, whilst at the same time his temper and conduct, if they were the rule of judgment, throw the utmost disgrace on the *thing*? This uncharitable way of crying up charity, and boasting in it, has, I'm afraid, sunk its native dignity in the account of many, alter'd the scripture-notion of it, and, by a sort of self-contradiction, turn'd it into a party-clew; and has made some serious christians very shy of distinguishing themselves by the *abused* name, whilst they admire, love, and honour, and have more of the thing. Really, Sir, I think I have good reason to say, that this sort of inconsistent temper and conduct has contributed more to sour some minds against that great ornament of the christian religion, and to lay an embargo upon others, to hinder their talking so much as otherwise they would about it, than any other method I ever met with. And after you have gone such lengths, I don't wonder at your apprehensions of a return of *personal scurrility, and nameless scandal*. But as I desire to have no dealing that way my self, so I hope you will have none from any other hand.

What I have observ'd under this head, might very justly have been rang'd under that of *misrepresentations*: But as it carries the highest evidence of unchristian charity, and may, by the blessing of God, be of use to mend your temper, and to put a check upon this way of writing, I thought proper to lay it before you in a section by itself. But 'tis time to have done with this. Let us now go on to consider,

S E C T.

S E C T. II.

Secondly, *Your unbecoming treatment of sacred things.*

AND here I am sorry to say, that such an air of levity and banter spreads over the face of the whole performance, as appears to me to be very unworthy of the solemn subject; very unsuitable to the gravity of a minister of Christ; and very apt to expose religion to the ridicule of the profane, instead of awakening any serious thoughts about it. You often jest upon most of the principles generally call'd *calvinistick*, and set them out in false lights, and then treat them in the ludicrous way. Some instances of this will fall more properly under the head of *misrepresentations*, where I shall likewise have occasion to take notice of your playing upon *John Calvin*, and *Martin Luther*; and setting them on a level with *Confusus*, *Mahomet*, and the *Pope*.

What sport do you make with the *evangelical turn*, that I said is to be given to moral duties? crying out, *what is this same evangelical turn?* pag. 75. And after you have given your sense of it, which you say is *declaring them to be essential to the* Ibid. *very being of christianity; pressing them as necessary to mens acceptance with God; and letting our hearers know that their final condemnation or acquittance at the judgment seat of Christ depends on their works;* you add, *if I mean any other turn, 'tis not worth while to enquire what turn it is. 'Tis not the turn of the gospel, nor a turn agreeable to common sense and reason; but my own turn, from which you shall not stay to turn me aside.* What a jingle of words is here! But pray, Sir, is not a regard to Christ

for assistance and acceptance, and are not evangelical motives to good works taken from him, and from his love to us? which I in part meant, and you have wholly suppress'd. Are not these worth while to enquire after? Are not these the turn of the gospel, or a turn agreeable to common sense and reason? What a surprizing omission of Christ, and the grace of God in him, and substituting our works in their room is here, to make way for a low jest upon the evangelical turn! *Adeon' te esse incogitantem?*

You forgetting (as I hope) what the apostle
 2 Cor. ii. says about the *savour of the knowledge of Christ*,
 14, 15, 16. talk merrily of the *savouriness* of my expressions,
 pag. 50. if they happen not to suit your taste. And what
 a droll do you run upon several of them? When
 pag. 36. I speak of *expatiating copiously on the most important things, and drawing out their deep and hidden glories*, i. e. say you, *I suppose the glories the people can't see without our eyes,——such glories, which, tho deep, may be drawn out; and tho hidden, yet are capable of being expos'd with perspicuity and enlargement to open view.* As if there were nothing deep in religion to be drawn out, and nothing hidden that may in measure be unfolded; but every thing were so plain and scanty, as to need no explication, or enlargement.

When speaking of the brightest glory of God, as display'd and recommended to us in the person and mediation of Jesus Christ, I say, if his name is not known, or if it don't reign and triumph in the discourses that are preach'd and heard, how shall this glory of God be seen and advanc'd in its most endearing and exalted strains? Your reflexion upon this is, *I know not which most to admire here, the sentiments or the style. Names reigning and triumphing, glory seen and advanc'd in its most endearing and exalted strains, are very*

very endearing and exalted strains indeed. But pray, Sir, wherein does the impropriety of my expressions consist? I am at a loss to know the reason of this ridicule, or what end it can answer, unless to raise distaste at the name, and the glory. And what you add about *preachers* Ibid. using the name of Christ impertinently, or to sanctify opinions, that, you fancy, are contrary to his religion, &c. looks too much as if something of this kind was aim'd at.

You quote my words where I speak of the *unsearchable riches of Christ*, as delightful to one's own and others souls. You suppose I mean the excellencies of christianity that can't be understood; and then add, how is such preaching delightful to one's own or others souls, viz. when the preacher is in the clouds himself, and keeps his congregation in impenetrable darkness? except they should both happen to be of such supernatural and incomprehensible constitutions, as to have their Souls delighted and improv'd by ignorance and darkness. Is this a becoming way of talking about the *unsearchable riches of Christ*? pag. 59.

You take all occasions to indulge this sportful humour, in descants upon things of the supernatural and incomprehensible kind, as if they were all to be jested out of our religion, and nothing mysterious were to be allowed to have any place in it. And yet, very consistently with this, you own there are more excellencies in christianity, than we can now discern; and that some of its doctrines are confessedly above our reach. Why then must they be exploded, as if it were ridiculous so much as to mention them? pag. 59. pag. 35.

But it seems you think you can give most scope to the ludicrous humour, by exposing the difficulties that arise in arguing for and against the eternal generation of the son of God; and in representing the precise distinction between Father, Son, and pag. 27, 28.

and Holy Ghost, as they all subsist in one divine nature, and are the one only God, as of very little importance for us to know, because 'tis incomprehensible, and can't be understood and known by us. I readily acknowledge with you, that there are inexplicable difficulties in these things, and that 'tis of very little importance indeed for us to know them, so far as they cannot be known; which is all that your expressions amount to. Who ever doubted this? or who ever laid the stress of importance upon knowing them, under this consideration of them? *That things are, and how they are*, have always been reckon'd enquiries of a different nature. The divinity of the Son of God *itself*, is what we count the matter of importance, and not the manner of his distinct subsistence from the Father. You see I own this, in a passage you have recited, in the same page, where I express the love and honour I have for those, that differ from me in their sentiments about the eternal generation.

Ibid.

pag. 29. You go on to urge the difficulties on both sides of the question; and then ask *what must your people do when the leaders are thus divided? when they differ about a doctrine, the belief of which is, according to them all, necessary to salvation, and about the importance of which they have been preaching, and praying, and scolding for these several years past?* I might justly complain of this as an odium cast upon your brethren, and as a misrepresentation, in which you suppose them to put the importance of some of their *different ways* of explaining and proving the doctrine, on the same foot with the importance of the *doctrine itself*. But at present I principally design your *unbecoming way* of treating this awful point for seven or eight pages together. 'Tis surely too sportful for the solemn subject, and too unfriendly towards it.

You

You urge difficulties, and banter modes of expression about the eternal generation of the son; and, as far as I find, say little, if any thing, in favour of his true divinity. You say, indeed, *you* pag. 33.
are not arguing against the proper deity of our Lord Jesus Christ: It may be so; but I don't find that you argue for it. You say, in this matter you think you are much more sound than my dear friends, who, to defend orthodoxy, are fallen from it, by denying the important article of the Son's generation, and who wou'd have been damn'd for hereticks, had they lived at the time of the Nicene Council. — That you pag. 34.
are more sound than my self, — and, treading in the steps of the old sound and orthodox Fathers, believe him actually begotten and generated, and thus allow him his true and proper subsistence, i. e. as you else where expresses it, you are orthodox to your self. But you don't say what sense of the fathers you are sound in, whose sense you know is matter of dispute, nor whether the Son of God in his true and proper subsistence is the true God, or a mere creature, or whether he was actually begotten from eternity or in time.

I wou'd charitably hope, you have higher thoughts of his divinity, than you have been pleased here to express. But let me ask you, Sir, what you wou'd think of one, that shou'd take a great deal of pains to ridicule the different accounts, that have been given, as to the manner of the incarnation of the Son of God, and of the resurrection from the dead? or the different accounts that have been given of the divine authority of the scriptures, as to the different degrees and manner of their inspiration? And was he to divert himself beyond modesty, with the different arguments that one and another have advanced to support their particular notions about these things, and with the difficulties that attend

attend them severally; and shou'd he thereupon add, *now what must your people do when their leaders are thus divided about doctrines, the belief of which is, according to them all, necessary to salvation, and about the importance of which they have been preaching, and praying, and scolding for these several years past?* And after all, shou'd he take no care to express his own belief of these points; but only say, *you will please to take notice, that I am not here arguing against them, and perhaps in a way of contempt on the orthodox fathers, whose sense in this argument must be supposed to have been matter of dispute, he should add, I tread in their steps, and am more sound than others.* Would you think he acted a friendly, decent, and reverent part, in his way of treating those important doctrines? I am sure I shou'd not; and I can't but say, 'twou'd have pleas'd me to have found a more serious turn, and more solemnity of temper in Mr. Chandler's way of speaking about the important doctrine of Christ's divinity. Your unfair dealing in this place with *me*, instead of my *critick*, shall be considered under the head of *misrepresentations*.

pag. 34.

You add at the close of all this, *I am very sensible that the plainness of the gospel-doctrine is no great recommendation of it to some persons, who affect to find out mysteries in almost every article of the christian faith. Oh this abuse of heighth and depth! is that which renders their faith valuable, &c.* But what all this, and a good deal more of the like nature that follows it, means, I cannot understand; unless to satyrize upon the religion of those, that believe there are still mysteries in christianity, or to expose the mysteries themselves to contempt.

The sacred name *Christ* comes in its turn, to be tofs'd about with an indecent luxuriance of fancy,

fancy, tho you profess to reverence it. But it don't seem to me very consistent with that reverence, to jest so freely about it, as if it were the name of a fellow-creature. You talk of making a noise about preaching Christ, and spend a whole page or more very merrily, about my frequent introducing the word *Christ* into my discourses; tho my text itself led me to it. You are at it again in several other places; see pages 43, 58, 76. And when Mr. Hubbard had spoke of him under the character of our *blessed Lord*, you could not help giving another fling, saying, *I think it should have been Christ*. Dr. Watts, whom you recommend, in another case, to my imitation, is, I am sure, in this well worthy of your's. *What sweet delight, says he, does St. Paul take in mentioning the very name of Christ! How does he dwell upon it in long sentences, and loves to repeat the blessed sound *!* pag. 14; pag. 10; 11. pag. 51.

The person of Christ, as well as his name, is too contemptuously spoken of, when you say of the wonder and songs of the angels; pray what did they wonder at, and sing songs of praises for? Was it for the name Christ, or was it merely for the person of Christ? or rather, was it not for the wonderful methods of divine grace in the redemption of the world by Christ? as if there was nothing in the person of Christ for them to wonder at, and sing praises for! pag. 53.

The distinction of the words *Christ*, and the Son of God, into his divine and office-titles, you call, with an air of disdain, an acute criticism, accurately distinguish'd, and a conceit which you leave me in full possession of; as if there were no distinction between them; or as if his divine and office-titles were of one and the same signification, and consequently he had no divinity, besides what lies pag. 2, 3.

* Sermons on various subjects, Vol. I. p. 330.

in his office. But I know you hate charging consequences, and I don't charge this upon you ; but only observe what your words seem to import, and how apt you are to talk with too much levity about Christ's *divine and office-titles*.

pag. 71.

You make a great deal too free with the awful term, an *absolute God*, which I shall have occasion to consider hereafter. And, I doubt, many will think a due reverence was wanting to the *name of God* himself, when, in all appearance, full of heat and resentment, you cry out *Good God ! to what lengths of infidelity, or rather censoriousness, are we run ! Awake, oh all ye apostate clergy, &c.* Here is the same sort of *apostrophe* used to the *Good God* and the *apostate clergy*, in the closest connexion of the words, and as far as appears, under the same temper of mind. I am afraid, in this connexion and hurry, it can hardly be excused from the charge of *taking God's name in vain*.

pag. 41,
43.

And tho you profess a reverence for every scripture-expression ; yet, in your common way of consistency with yourself, you seem displeased with the use of some of them, and talk with a shocking freedom of others. You seem to have some exceptions against the scripture-expressions of *being in Christ, cleaving to Christ, coming to Christ, Christ's being made to us*, and his being said to *dwell in our hearts, &c.* You don't like to have these used too much, lest they become a *criterion of preaching Christ*, and wou'd intimate that these terms can't be us'd with such *propriety* now, as they might *by Christ and his apostles* ; as if they were now to be banish'd like obsolete words.

pag. 43.

Ibid.

But why, say you, shou'd they not be explained equally with other expressions ? No doubt they ought ; and who ever pretended the contrary ? But why may they not be used sometimes, as many other passages are, without a particular explication,

explication, especially when common christians generally know what they mean, by the frequent explications that are given of them? It seems some people must be criminal which ever way they take; criminal, for using *unscriptural* expressions, tho they contain scriptural sense; and criminal, for *explaining* scriptural expressions in *human* words: and now they must be criminal, for using *the very words of scripture* without a particular explication always attending them. To put a check upon this use of scripture-terms, you tell me, what every one knows, that Christ's *dwelling in the heart*, and *coming to Christ*, and the like, can't be understood *personally, locally, and corporally*. pag. 40, 41, 42.

When I speak of recommending Christ to believers, that they may *cleave with full purpose of heart to the Lord*; that *as they have received Christ Jesus the Lord, they may walk in him*; and that they *may have fellowship with Christ, and with the father thro' him, and their joy may be full**: You give a turn to all these passages of scripture; which I think too low, and looks too much as if you meant to discountenance, or make light of the *inwards* of religion, of heart-adherence to the Lord, of Christ's influence thro' faith unto our holy walking in him, and of that spiritual fellowship or communion with God in Christ, which serious christians sometimes speak of, and have found with great reality and advantage in their holy converse with God in Christ; *i. e.* in the discoveries and communications of his grace to them; and in the exercise of their graces, or of all the solemn devotions and aspirations of their souls towards him. Accordingly your interpretation of those passages, which leaves out all things of this nature, and is part, but I conceive not the

* See the sermons, 1st edit. pag. 250. 2d edit. pag. 70.

pag. 42. whole of the truth of those scripture-expressions, runs thus, *This is what the apostle means by cleaving to the Lord, viz. adherence to their profession as christians, and by walking in Christ as they have received him, i. e. living agreeable to their faith and profession as christians. And the great advantages they enjoy, by being called to the knowledge of the gospel, Christ having procured for them all the benefits of salvation, and amongst others, their reconciliation and peace with God, is the true scripture-notion of having fellowship with the Father, and his Son Jesus Christ.* Whether your restrained interpretation of all these places has a favourable aspect upon what is call'd *experimental* religion, let christians judge.

But of all the slights you have put upon scripture-expressions, none come up to your distasteful run upon the prophet's phrase, where he speaks
 Isa. 64. 6. *of all our righteousnesses as filthy rags.* I should
 pag. 77. really blush to transcribe your loathsome way of exploding that scripture-expression: It shocks me when I think of it, and I dare not set my hand to give it a farther spread in the world. If Mr. *Woolston* and his admirers had talked in such a manner about it, I should not have wonder'd; but for Mr. *Chandler* to do it, who has wrote very well in vindication of the divine authority of the scripture against the deists, and
 pag. 44. professes so much reverence for every scripture expression, is really astonishing. What self-contradiction, and rude banter of scripture words is there! This might likewise be put under the head of *misrepresentation*, with regard to those that you intend to besmear with it. For what sober man ever us'd this phrase in the way that
 pag. 77. you have put it, as a commendation of virtue, and persuasive to good works? or ever spoke of our best works under this character, any otherwise than
 as

as in our imperfect state they are mix'd with sin, and therefore can't come up to the strict demands of God's righteous law, or be sufficient to justify us in his sight? I think you can't but know, that whenever the phrase is us'd by serious christians, it is with a view, not to recommend good works on the one hand, nor to discountenance the practice of them on the other; but to humble the soul before God under a sense of the criminal defects of its best performances, and to turn off its dependance from them, to Christ and his righteousness; and that they are urged, under other considerations of them, as absolutely necessary to salvation.

One would have thought that a person, duly sensible of the horrible evil and defiling nature of sin, instead of talking in your gay airs about our *righteousnesses* being *as filthy rags*, shou'd rather have been ready with all humbleness of mind to go into Job's language, *Behold I am vile, what shall I answer thee? I will lay my hand upon my mouth. Tho I were righteous, yet would not I answer, but I would make supplication to my judge. If I justify my self, mine own mouth shall condemn me; if I say I am perfect, it shall also prove me perverse. If I wash my self with snow-water, and make my hands never so clean; yet shalt thou plunge me in the ditch, and mine own clothes shall abhor me. For he is not a man as I am, that I should answer him, and we should come together in judgment. May God give you and me more self-abasing thoughts of the sin, that mingles with all our best performances!*

I shall close this head with some of your own words to the author of the *literal scheme*, and to the author of the *grounds and reasons*, &c. I abhor to see reflection and sneer mixt with controversy*. It

* Reflections on the conduct of modern deists, pag. 110.

is highly requisite that controversies of this nature should be manag'd with great moderation, decency, and truth. Passion and prejudice, unfair misrepresentations and injurious charges, banter and ridicule, how much soever abounding in other controversies, are certainly very improper in this, where the great debate is, which is the most certain way to virtue and happiness in this life, and to the more substantial and durable blessedness of another †. This leads me to the next general head, and that is

S E C T. III.

Thirdly, *Your Misrepresentations.*

YOU can't but observe, that I have pointed out several things of this nature under both the foregoing heads. I don't think it worth my while to repeat the unpleasing labour; there is too much of this kind still before me. 'T would be very tedious and fruitless to fling together all your most trifling instances of this sort; such as your remarks upon my frequent use of the term *Christ*; as if I laid any stress upon that individual word; and your descant upon my *monosyllables*, which are sufficiently plain; as if they were ridiculous because they are short. Of the same strain is the *self-evident* turn you pretend to give to my words, that *preaching Christ is peculiarly suited to the gospel-dispensation*; as if nothing were preach'd about Christ before the gospel-dispensation; and it were not possible for ministers, under the gospel-dispensation, to preach unsuitable to the nature of that dispensation, which was the thing that head was design'd to guard against. Your triumphant question is as trifling as the rest, *Do*

pag. 43.

pag. 54.

pag. 55.

† *Vindication of the christian religion.* pag. 153, 154.

Misrepresentations.

31

you think, says the question, any gospel-minister needs to be told, that 'tis his special office to preach Christ, or, as you interpret it, the gospel? But why pag. 55; *not told, that they shou'd act up to character? When I say the most desirable success of the ministry very much depends on preaching Christ, i. e. say you, put into plain English, no minister can expect to promote* pag. 56; *the interest of christianity without preaching it; as if preaching christianity in your notion of it, and preaching Christ in the sense I was there speaking of, were terms of equal extent. You will have it, that the honour of God and the christian* pag. 57; *religion being nearly concerned in preaching Christ, is the same thing with the former head; but that spoke of the success of the ministry on the souls of men, as it makes christians, and builds them up in Christ**; and the honour of God, and of the christian religion, are *effects or consequences* of that success; and surely these may be distinguish'd, in notion at least. I only desire any one to read the discourse it self on these heads, and on that which follows, with your remarks upon them, and then judge, whether trifling misrepresentations don't run thro' the whole of those reflexions. But these things are too low and worthless, to waste our time upon them. There are other misrepresentations of greater importance in themselves, and to the principal points before us.

A remarkable instance of this nature is the manner of your citing, and reflecting upon two *strictures*, thrown into my margin on *Mic. 5. 2.* and *Psal. 2. 7.* not one syllable of which was my own, as every one must know, that has seen how I introduc'd and placed them there †. But in order to fix the banter designed, for four or *pag. 36* five pages together, upon me; you are so very — 34.

* See the sermons, 1st edit. pag. 258. 2d edit. pag. 78.

† See the sermons, 1st edit. pag. 195, &c. 2d edit. p. 19, &c.

ingenuous

ingenuous as to set out the subject of your sport in such a manner as to lead those, who had not seen my sermons, to apprehend that a great part of it, at least, was my own; accordingly, in fact, several have been led by your remarks to think so of it. Tho you sometimes mention my *critick* together with me, and quote some passages as his; yet at other times, you call his words, *my criticism*, *my meaning*, what *I add*, what *I prove* from the new version, and the *Rabbins*; and say that *I have* hit the translation of the *latin* sentence, in *my* acts acting but not acted, and speak of *my* three inferences deduced from *my* premises: I think I never saw so unfair a representation before.

But wou'd it not much better have become an undesigning man to have let the world know, that all this was only a *critick's* note, which really was put at the bottom of a page, tho you only say, it *might serve well enough to be there*? Shou'd not common justice, and much more the *friendship* you pretend to, have induced you to tell the reader, that not one word of it was either really or professedly my own, or was ever brought into the pulpit, which is the plain truth of the case. But then you cou'd not so well have brought *me* into the ridicule, you had a mind to throw on some expressions of the *critick*; and cou'd no more have made them *mine*, than those of *Eusebius* or *Xenophon*, which I have put into other marginal notes. As I shall not think my self accountable for every particular mode of expression, in all the quotations I may make from other authors in this letter, while they answer the principal design for which I make them; so I can't reckon it just to palm some of this author's particular forms of expression upon me, while the sense of the *Hebrew words*, and some
of

of his arguings upon them, which I principally quoted him for, are applicable to my purpose, and will subsist without the use of those particular forms. What an unkind part was this! Was it worth Mr. *Chandler's* while to put on such a disguise, only to gratify an humour that may tickle the fancy, but can never give any manly pleasure in a reflection upon it?

As I never chose the *metaphysical* way of expressing my self, I shall not go into a critical defence of those passages of this author, which you so much expose to ridicule. I am free to own, that I always find myself most lost in confusion, when I wou'd think or speak most accurately about *God's* eternity; and yet I think the subject is too awful, for a luxuriant fancy to run riot upon the well-designed, tho feeble, attempts of grave and learned men to express their sentiments about it. I presume you know, Sir, that pious modern divines of considerable note, as well as the more antient *schoolmen*, have gone into a like way of talking upon this subject. I cou'd instance in several, but shall content my self with just referring to Mr. *Charnock*, vol. 1. pag. 113, 115, 118. where he speaks as much in this strain, as most writers I have met with: And, possibly, the reason of your not translating the *latin* sentence of the schoolmen was, that the *English* reader might be the less apprehensive, that it has not always been thought so very ridiculous to speak of *God's acts from eternity, as incessant, and immanent, and without succession of first and last*. This you allow comes up to *acts acting not acted*, as the *critick's* words are, without your *but*, which I suppose you inserted to make them appear still more absurd: And this is what has been generally meant by the learned, in their *νῦν* and *nunc stans*, as expressions of eternity.

As to your demand, what can be meant by an *act never acted*? I shall only answer, that the meaning of the writers, who talk in that way about the generation of the son, certainly is not, as you say it must mean, *either an act never accomplished, or continually repeated*; but an act that never ceases, or that is without beginning or end, and every way as necessary as the divine being itself. And therefore they are so far from saying, as you by your consequences wou'd make them, that *the Son is not yet actually generated* or *that he has not any proper existence or subsistence*; that they hereby put his generation, and subsistence upon the same foot of eternity, necessity, and perfection, as the existence of God himself. They consider it as no more *imperfect* or *incomplete*, than the existence of the Father; and as no more separable from his existence, than the rays are from the existence of the sun in the firmament, which are coeval with it, and which necessarily, perpetually, and actually have, do, and will proceed from it thro' the whole duration of the sun itself. And thus the antients, *the sound and orthodox Fathers*, used to represent it, tho that, and every other shadow of what is infinite, must fall infinitely short of a just and full resemblance.

In like manner, according to these gentlemen's way of talking, the expression, *this day*, don't, as you intimate, *spoil all their criticism on Psal. 2. 7*, any more than it wou'd for God to say at any time, I am *this day existing*. Your bare assertion of the sense of that text in opposition to mine, is nothing to me; unless you had answer'd what I have offered †, without the help of my author's criticism, to support it; especially since you al-

† See the sermons 1st edit. pag. 185—190. 2d edit. pag. 10—14.

low the truth of what I there quoted him for, which was to show the *Hebrew* way of expressing the *present* time. Your jeer about the *ostentation of learning* is not worth my notice. But what you add, to take off the force of the criticism about the *present* tense, is no great proof of your extraordinary skill that way. For whilst it is pleaded that the *prater* tense is *sometimes* used for the *present*; who ever denied that it is also sometimes used for the *prater*?

The next misrepresentation I shall turn you to, is that of the term, *absolute God*. You bring in my words, that *the present modish turn of religion looks, as if we began to think that we have no need of a mediator, but that all our concerns were to be managed with God, as an absolute God*. Upon this ^{pag. 65,} you give a loose to your sportful fancy to lanch ^{66.} out upon the words, *an absolute God*. Tho you suppose (and indeed can't suppose otherwise from my words) that *I mean God exclusive of a mediator*; yet you very consistently say, *you can but guess at my meaning in the expression of managing our concerns with God as an absolute God*: And then ask *but how does the doctrine of a mediator alter the absolute perfection of the divine nature, or his absolute right in and propriety over his creatures, i. e.* ^{pag. 65.} *render God less absolute than he was before?* Who ever said it did? or what was there in my words to suggest such a thought? or that the mediation of Christ *shou'd alter God's nature, or* ^{Ibid.} *the eternal purposes and counsels of his will?* or that we have not *still to do with an absolute God, as that means a God absolutely perfect and unalterable?* ^{pag. 66.} I am however glad to find you are willing to allow all this. But, without any manner of occasion offer'd for it, you, with too much contempt, bring in a reflection upon *absolute sovereignty, absolute election, and absolute reprobation or preteri-*

tion. You join all these together, as if I, or the generality of those, that hold absolute election to holiness and happiness without a previous regard to foreseen good works, held absolute reprobation or preterition without a previous regard to foreseen sin.

Ibid.

As far as I know the sense of *my dear friends* as you are pleased to call them, they most generally suppose, with me, that God's eternal sovereign decrees were conversant about the salvation of men, as objects of *mercy* and *compassion*, which is consequent to the supposition of their being sinners; and that the decrees consider'd the lump, out of which God makes one vessel to honour, and another to dishonour, as a *corrupt mass*; and looked upon the vessels of wrath, as *fitting themselves for destruction* by their own sin, while they considered the vessels of mercy, as needing to be *afore prepared to glory*, according to the riches of God's grace: Thus we understand the apostle to represent it in *Rom. 9. 15, 16, 22, 23.* And pray, Sir, why may not God be allowed to be as absolute in his *sovereignty*, with regard to his design about *sinners*, as in any other perfection, consistent with his unerring wisdom in acts of righteousness and grace? Must he needs proceed in ways of absolute or strict righteousness with *all* on one hand, or in ways of absolute or mere grace with *all* on the other, because he does with *some*? Is there unrighteousness in his dealing righteously with *some*, when he might have dealt in the same manner with *all*? Or is there unrighteousness in showing grace to *some*, when he was not oblig'd to show it to *any*? Or is there no room for absolute sovereignty to interpose unto the exercise of righteousness or grace, as infinite wisdom shou'd direct, in a case where all was running to ruin, and where there was no antecedent distinction in the nature of things? Shall he
not

not do what he will with his own, when he does no wrong to any? Or shall the eye of any *be evil because his is good*, where the case was so provoking, and under such a forfeiture, that no good could reasonably have been expected from him? What says the apostle in this case? *Nay, but, O man, who art thou that thus repliest against God?*

You begin another misrepresentation, where you suggest that *preaching charity, which is Christ's* pag. 13. *new commandment, was out of Mr. Coward's thoughts and intentions, and forgotten by his lecturers; and in your bantering strain go on to observe, how vastly he must have been pleas'd to have the great law of love to all good men explain'd and enforc'd. Then you advance still farther, and make no difficulty to affirm, that the present set of lecturers have all* Ibid. *forgotten this, or waved it. How could you say this, and be so peremptory in it? when Mr. Hubbard particularly, has about two pages and an half, on purpose to improve our love to Christ, into a love to all the members of his mystical body; and that in proportion to the visible appearance of Christ's Image on them, without regard to other distinctions, pag. 136, 137, 138. And in that sermon of mine, which you was particularly examining, love to one another is professedly recommended, as one branch of the way of preaching Christ, that enforces moral duties with a reference to him*.*

Having spoke of *personal duties*, I there go on to show the way of the apostle Paul's enforcing *relative duties*, saying, *Be ye kind one to another, tender-hearted, forgiving one another, even* Eph. 4.32. *as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you. Walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, &c.* Then proceeding to the apostle Peter's way of preaching those duties, I recite, as another specimen, what

* See the sermons, 1st edit. pag. 230, 231, 232. 2d edit. 51, 52.

- 1 Pet. 2. he says, among other things, about *Christ's having left us an example that we should follow his steps,*
 21—23. —who when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffer'd, he threaten'd not, &c. And then refer, as a farther pattern of this way of preaching Christ, to his exhortation to *add to their faith*
 2 Pet. 1. *virtue, — brotherly kindness and charity.*
 5—8.

Sometimes you represent things, as if I had forgot *all morality* as well as charity, and would leave that out of my preaching Christ. I own that in some instances you *retract*, as well as *suggest* this: But wherefore must it be *suggested*, if it must be *retracted* too? Why, others may believe it tho you don't. And you spread intimations of that kind so plentifully thro' your remarks, that an inattentive reader must look upon
 pag. 20. me as the guilty man. You say, you *can't help thinking that if any minister stately chuses to insist on nice and curious speculations, that have no tendency to make men better, he perverts his office, and doth the gospel of Christ a real disservice. Godliness and virtue is the great end of all the gospel-dispensation.* But what occasion was there for talking thus to me, who have said nothing that could fairly lead you to such a thought, unless to cast a slur where it is not deserved, or to render some doctrines odious, which you had a mind to stigmatize?

This, indeed, you seem to have in view, when
 pag. 20, you add, in part of the next sentence, *let any*
 21. *man's faith be ever so orthodox, yet if his life be immoral and habitually vicious, he is an heretick in practice, which is the most criminal heresy he can be guilty of.* I as little value an orthodox faith, join'd with an immoral and habitually vicious life, as Mr. Chandler. However, you shall have the pleasure of calling the vicious life or practice an *heresy*. I thought heresies signify'd self-condemning
doctrines,

doctrines, that have a bad influence, and not the *bad life* itself. But I descend too low in marking out inaccuracy or impropriety of expression; and should degrade my self still further, were I to take notice of all your other little slips, which are of small importance: Were I to indulge this trifling humour, I shou'd have more work of that kind, than wou'd suit my inclination. However, for once to use your phrase, where both *doctrines* and *practice* are heretical, that is worst of all; and therefore heresy in practice is not, as you call it, the *most* criminal heresy.

You except against my saying, that moral duties are *advantageous to our salvation*. You are at it again, and put your own constructions upon it, which, I assure you, don't in all their parts express my sense. But the phrase is so exceedingly offensive, that you cannot have done with it yet. Towards the end of the remarks, you bring it in again, and represent as if I said, *they are barely advantageous to men, but have no influence on their acceptance and salvation*. This is not very consistent with your allowing, more than once before, that I speak of them as *essential to the very being of christianity*; by which you suppose I mean, as I really do, *that they are an essential part of it, and essentially necessary to the character of a christian, and to every man's entrance into heavenly happiness*. Is not this more, in your sense of the expression, than *barely* advantageous to salvation? Don't this make them indispensibly necessary to it?

You say, *you doubt not, but I have as serious a regard to the morals of the gospel, as I have to the doctrines of it*. I hope I have. But I must not come off thus; for you add in the very next words, *as your restrictive way of preaching Christ seems to mean preaching up the doctrines that more immediately*

pag. 5.

pag. 21.

pag. 83.

pag. 15.

pag. 74.

pag. 25.

Ibid.

pag. 21, 57. immediately regard the person, &c. of Christ, as distinct from his precepts, I cannot think this to be either the duty or prudence of a gospel-minister, nor preaching Christ directly. And in other places you represent, as if I confined preaching Christ to the restrictive way; and was for stately insisting on nice and curious speculations: or some peculiar favourite doctrines of a party: or would have ministers preach some chosen doctrines, and omit others, or set up faith in opposition to practice.

pag. 20. But tho I own I am for preaching up doctrines, that more immediately regard the person of Christ, as well as others; and think every faithful minister will do it; yet where have I ever spoke of preaching Christ in the restrictive way, to the exclusion of practical improvements to moral duties, or to set up faith in opposition to practice? Or where have I confin'd preaching Christ to the restrictive way, or to any peculiar, chosen, favourite doctrines of a party? On the other hand, have I not professedly insisted at large on preaching Christ in the latitude-way, and represented it, as taking in the whole compass of moral duties, manag'd with a reference to him*? To what purpose then are all such like innuendos in these and many other pages, with surfeiting repetition, of which these are but a small specimen? They may make an ill impression on some minds, as I find they have, with regard to my sermons among those that have not seen them; but, I shou'd think, must leave a worse reflection in your own.

I'll only add one or two instances farther of this sort: One is when you wou'd interpret what I say about preaching obedience, as if I mean

pag. 27. preaching it in general, without ever coming to the

* See the sermons, 1st edit. pag. 227—232. 2d edit. pag. 48—52.

particular branches of duty. But you very charitably add, *I will not suspect this to be your meaning, till you declare it, because it will deserve some reflections, which I had much rather forbear.* 'Tis surprising, Sir, that you should take pleasure to insinuate things of this nature, with such a sting in the tail; and that you shou'd do this, not only without evidence, but *against* it: For you can't be ignorant, that for several pages together in this very sermon, I go into a long detail of all sorts of particular duties, both personal and relative, as specimens of the way in which I recommend the preaching of moral duties with a reference to Christ *.

At other times, you wou'd have it thought, that I reckon *insisting on natural religion, or the religion of nature, a very heathenish and unchristian thing*, and wou'd discountenance preaching its principles *in order to lay the surer foundation for the support of christianity.* I am far from suggesting any thing like this, and much approve of the laudable attempts that have been made with good success that way. What I have said had no relation at all to preaching the principles of natural religion with this view, but only to making the things themselves our *darling topicks*, irrespectively to Christ, and in a manner confining ourselves to them, as if there were not still something more in the religion of *Jesus* to fill up a place in our ministrations.

But I have not only to complain of misrepresentations of my preaching, barely with regard to not enforcing duties of morality, or laying aside the use of natural religion, as subservient to christianity; but likewise with regard to the principles upon which I may be supposed to enforce moral duties; and indeed with regard to all

* See the sermons, *ibid.*

the principles that are commonly known by the name of *calvinistick*, which, I am not ashamed to own, are, in the main, the principles I believe to be most conformable to the word of God.

pag. 76. It looks too much with a face this way, that you so palpably pervert the meaning of one of my expressions, to bring in a contemptuous turn upon *Calvin*, and *Luther*. The words recited from my sermon are these: *They* (moral duties) *are usually harangued upon without reference to Christ, as fruits of righteousness to the praise and glory of God by him.* Your reply is, *who then, I beseech you, do they refer them to? To Confusius, or Mahomet, or the Pope, or John Calvin, or Martin Luther? I am afraid, if the truth were out, the reason of your complaint is, because they refer them to Jesus Christ only, and not to one or other of the names I have mention'd, who are all of them very considerable persons, but none of them oracles, or standards of the faith with me.* And cou'd you, Sir, in your very heart believe that this was the reason of my complaint? Was there any thing in the sermons leading to such an apprehension? Is not their professed and evident design, thro' the whole of them, to promote the preaching of Christ and him only? And did not I, among other things, say, that *all doctrines, &c. must be referred up to him, as revealed or enjoined by him* *, with abundance more to that purpose? In other places I likewise said, that the *ministers of Christ are commission'd officers, and are to go forth in his name and authority, to publish all that they find in their bibles concerning him, according to the best of their understandings, just as they find it there: And that they are not to bring their own sense to it; but to search out Christ's sense in it, and to declare that to the people: That they are to open and keep close to their commission,*

ibid.

* See the sermons, 1st edit. pag. 228. 2d edit. pag. 49.

to withhold nothing that may be profitable concerning Christ, to add nothing of their own to it, and to make no alterations in it, &c. And that they are to publish all the incomprehensible mysteries of Christ, just as far as he has revealed them, without attempting to explain them any farther than his own word has cast a light upon them *. You have recited one of these passages in other parts of your remarks, by looking into which you cou'd not but see the rest, as they stand connected together. With what justice then cou'd you say after all this, that if the truth were out, the reason of my complaint is, because they refer them to Jesus Christ only, and not to one or other of the names you had mention'd ?

pag. 35.

I make Calvin and Luther no more my oracles, or standards of my faith, than you do of your's ; tho I believe they understood the mind of Christ in the gospel better than, I suppose, you think they did. But why must the doctrines they taught, who were christians, and protestants of great use and figure in the church of Christ, be degraded as low as those of Confusius, Mahomet, or the Pope, unless to show that you have an equal contempt of all the peculiar doctrines, that custom has distinguish'd by their several names ? And why must my words, that explain themselves, and are too determinate to give the least occasion for the construction you have put upon them, be forced into it, in a way that throws too much reproach upon the instruments and doctrines of the glorious reformation ?

Farther, to show your good will to these doctrines, you have often wandered from your subject to cast deformity upon them. You misrepresent some, and blend false and disowned principles with others of them, by which the world may think they all go together in close connec-

* Ibid. 237, 238. 2d edit. 57, 58.

tion, and ought to be detested, as indeed they ought by every one that hears them, if they were as you have form'd them. And he that supposes them to be my sentiments, must take me for a downright *Antinomian*, which I abhor in all its parts, principle and practice, as much as Mr. Chandler.

pag. 22. You speak of *some*, I know not who, nor have heard before that there are any such in our days, *by whom St. James is not accounted to be very sound in the point of justification.* But I understand the grudge against one of the first reformers. And to show your regard to faith, you add, what I believe as heartily as you, that *if it hath not works, it is dead.* But I own I can't see the propriety of your remarkable comment upon those words of the apostle, which is this; *Of consequence, 'tis obedience that gives the life to faith, and therefore is as much more valuable than mere faith, as the soul is than the body which it animates.* I find you are for consequences, when you think they serve your turn; but should not wonder to find you against charging them, if you are always as unhappy at them as here. I acknowledge a dead, fruitless, inoperative faith, is a very worthless thing; but as gospel-obedience is the fruit of a living faith, which shows it to be alive; and true faith is as the soul that animates the *obedience of faith*, which *works by love*, I never thought that the fruit gave life to the root; but that it was rather the effect and evidence of its life; or that the animating principle shou'd be called the body, and the thing animated shou'd be called the soul, only because its life proves the inhabitation of that principle there.

Your whole discourse for two or three pages together, in that as well as other places, to run down the protestant scripture-doctrine of justification

cation by faith only, and to set up that of justification by works, is, I think, so far from *evangelizing good works, or giving them the evangelical turn*, that it is *legalizing* them, or giving them the *legal* turn, as it sets them on the foot of a covenant of works. And tho some of your expressions may be allowed; yet, as you have mingled things together, I can by no means admit that the whole of your explication of my words in that place, is my meaning in them. I apprehend *that duty, repentance, and obedience must be preach'd as acceptable to God thro' Christ*, in some of the senses you there speak of; and that they are *advantageous to our salvation*, as from the very nature of things, and by the express appointment of God, they are necessarily connected with it; as they are a part of salvation itself, as they are preparations of the subject for the compleat enjoyment of it; and as they shall have a reward of grace, and shall be owned for proofs and evidences of the truth of our faith at the last day. I can believe them to be advantageous to our salvation in these, and such like senses, without supposing them to be our justifying righteousness, or that our *final acquittance depends on our works*, which, as I understand it, by what you say here and in other places on this head, is what you call *their proper share and influence in securing men the divine favour, viz. in their present and final justification until acceptance*.

However, *this you affirm is the plain declaration of the gospel itself, which can never be evaded by any subtle distinctions whatsoever*. What you call subtle distinctions, if I know your meaning, are to me very plain and obvious; at least there are some that are so. Two of the scriptures you have added to confirm your sense, *viz. Mat. 7. 21. & 25. 34, &c.* speak indeed of the future judgment; but,

Mat. 12.

37.

Jam. 2. 17.
&c.

pag. 81.

pag. 23.

but, I think, say nothing about *justification*. And as to the other two, one of our blessed Lord, by *thy words shalt thou be justified, and by thy words shalt thou be condemned*; and the other of the apostle James, *ye see then how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only*: These can't be understood of justification in the same sense that the apostle Paul speaks of it, when he says we are justify'd by *faith only* and *not by works*. There must therefore be some distinction in the case. And I think, among others, the distinction is easy between the justification spoken of in those places, and the justification which he proves at large to be by faith, and by faith only; as one relates to the justification of the sincerity of our christian profession, and of the truth of that faith by which we are justified; and the other relates to the change of a man's state before God, or to his discharge from law-condemnation, and acceptance with God to eternal life, by the righteousness of Christ in a way of believing. The first branch of this distinction may likewise easily be applied to your other two texts in *Matthew*, if you will have it that they speak of justification. But as I no more design to enter into any dispute with you about justification, then you do with me, I shall only refer the reader for his further satisfaction to Dr. Owen's judicious and elaborate reconciliation of the apostles James and Paul in this point *.

In the next paragraph you tell me, that *insisting on mere doctrines tends in its nature to set men loose in their regards to practice*; and you exemplify this in the following instances, *viz. perpetually inculcating faith, as the only requisite to salvation*,

* See the Dr. on justification by faith, &c. chap. xx. p. 557, &c.

pressing men to an absolute dependance on Christ's righteousness to make up all the wilful deficiencies of their own: buoying up their hopes with the doctrine of eternal justification; telling them that they have no ability, strength or power at all, to promote their own happiness and salvation; that their best works are as filthy rags; and placing religion only in attendance on ordinances, which are only the means and instruments of piety and virtue. And then you go on in the two following pages to explode and triumph over this way of preaching, as you have represented it.

Who wou'd not suppose by all this that I am for eternal justification? And that my further sentiments are, that in the whole business of salvation nothing but faith is necessary, that all wilful deficiencies are consistent with a saving dependance on Christ's righteousness; that men are no better than mere machines, that they are not reasonable creatures, capable of considering, or endeavouring after things relating to their own happiness and salvation, or receptive of divine influence, in the way of God's promises and appointments, to enable them to succeed in their pursuits after them; that because their best works are, in the prophet's phrase, *as filthy rags*, on account of the sins that mingle with them, and therefore are insufficient to justify them, they ought to have no value for them, no aim at them, nor think them useful to any good purposes whatsoever; and that the whole of religion is to be placed only in attendance on ordinances, which are only the means and instruments of piety and virtue? I don't well understand the force of the last of these sentences. Pray how can ordinances be used as means and instruments without a view to the end? or how can the end be warrantably hoped for, without using the means

means and instruments of attaining it? But to return, you must needs know, Sir, that there is nothing of all this in my sermons. Why then are these things suggested, but to throw an odium upon me and my *dear friends*, or rather on the gospel doctrines we profess and you disguise?

pag. 83.

This sort of misrepresentation is brought in at every turn, and interwoven with the main texture of your remarks. 'Twould be exceeding tedious to recite the half of them; and therefore I shall only take notice of one more, where I think you have thrust together the greatest number, in so narrow a compass, that I ever met with. In answer to my speaking of *ineffectual principles to secure the practice of moral duties*, you, in a satyrical strain, follow me with a croud of interrogatories, saying, *What are these ineffectual principles you speak of? Do they (ministers) urge moral duties, as indifferent things? Do they tell men God sees no sin in his elect? That they are not under a law to Christ? That they have not any power or ability whatsoever to perform their duty? That they are absolutely passive in the work of conversion? That their best works are as dung and dross, and of consequence of no intrinsic value in themselves? That they are required only in point of gratitude? That they are barely advantageous to men, but have no influence on their acceptance and salvation? or that their final justification depends upon their being cloathed with the robe of Christ's righteousness, exclusive of all regard to their own personal holiness, and new obedience?* You say in the next following words, *you are persuaded I don't think the generality of preachers in this scheme; which looks like a low insinuation, as if it was the want of preaching these principles that I complained of.* But to soften the matter a little,
or

or rather, perhaps, to pin it down upon me, you add, *you wou'd hope also that I don't charge their principles with being ineffectual to secure the practice of moral duties, because they don't enforce them with such arguments as these.* You barely wou'd hope and that is all. You can't find in your heart to say you *believe* I don't. However that be, I must aver that this is as unfair a misrepresentation of principles, with a seeming design to expose calvinistical doctrines, as can well be contrived. But some of these we absolutely abhor, and others we as absolutely deny, in the sense you have put upon them: I can't suppose that you think this to be a just representation, merely because you may, perhaps, imagine some of these things to be the consequences of mine and my brethrens opinions; for you don't think it just to charge men with consequences they themselves deny: And, if you understand the controversy, you can't but know, that they deny these things as you have stated them, and that the opinion of the generality among them is very different from, and, in some instances, directly contrary to, what you have here set forth. pag. 78.

They, as far as I know, never urge moral duties as *indifferent things*. They not only plead for God's absolute omniscience, but likewise say, he *sees sin in all his elect*; and that so as to be displeased with it, and with them for it. He sees sin in them before they are justified, so as to charge it upon them in his law to their condemnation; but don't see it in them when they are justified, so as to condemn them for it, or in a judicial manner to lay it to their charge: And, I hope, 'tis too much a contradiction in terms for you to say the contrary. And they allow and plead that *we are under a law to Christ*. As

H

to

John 15.
5.
Phil. 4.
13.

to mens not having *any power or ability whatsoever*, as you put it : They allow a power for rational and moral actions, and for thoughts about, and external performances of, religion ; but only plead that they have no power or ability, of themselves, to perform their duty in a spiritual and acceptable manner, our Lord himself having said, that in this sense *without him they can do nothing* ; but they *can do all* the parts of duty expected from them in this imperfect state, *thro' Christ, who strengtheneth them*. And who among us speaks of being *absolutely passive in the work of conversion*, which by the very term, supposes an *action* in men's turning to God ? We only mean passive, as to the influence of the spirit in regeneration, to enable us for spiritual and holy action, or for turning both in heart and life to God. We likewise, after the apostle, own our *best works*, in the present state of imperfection, *are as dung and dross*, when compared with Christ and his perfect righteousness ; and when tried by the perfect standard of all righteousness in God's holy law. But here again you are miserably out in the business of consequences, when you add, that *of consequence they are of no intrinsic value in themselves*. What ! of no intrinsic value because not perfect ? We don't deny an intrinsic distinction in the nature of things between moral good and evil ; between spiritual and carnal, holy and unholy actions ; or that the first of these are not more agreeable to the divine nature and will, than the last. Much less do we say, that they are required *only in point of gratitude* ; which is not very consistent with your own account of what we say in the next words, that they are *advantageous to men*. Indeed you here disingenuously put in the word *barely*, as if I had never said any thing more about them :

I suppose this was to take off an appearance of inconsistency with the foregoing words ; but you thereby plunge your self into another, as bad or worse ; for in other places (as has been observed) you own that by *advantageous*, I mean *absolutely necessary to salvation*. And in what respects their influence on men's acceptance and salvation is to be considered, and how far their *final justification* (as you call it) *depends on their being clothed with the robe of Christ's righteousness, exclusive of all regards* (as you injuriously put it) *to their own personal holiness and new obedience*, hath been sufficiently cleared in my answer to some foregoing misrepresentations.

I don't well know, Sir, what you intend by these unfair methods of stating the sentiments of those that differ from you. If you would suggest that I am chargeable with them, as you have painted them out, it is very unjust. If you design to fling disgrace upon all persons and principles, that you are minded to run down, it is that, and worse. I leave it to your own conscience to give it a name. I have done with this kind of misrepresentation, leaving others of the like nature to every one's own observation. But there is one of another sort, which it may be proper to examine, before we proceed to the next general head.

With your usual fair and charitable disposition, you give an unkind turn to the *third* inference of my *second* sermon, which was this. *Let it be your great concern to use and improve the preaching of Christ. Here, you suppose I mean to frequent* pag. 89. *and improve the preaching of Christ, because I add, if ministers are to preach Christ, the people are to hear him preached.* No doubt that was my meaning, and I thought no bad one. But you have turn'd it to such a meaning, as I never thought of,

pag. 90.

and as I shou'd have imagin'd, no good nature in the world wou'd have once supposed I did; i. e. say you, *come to me and my friends who preach Christ in a christian manner. Don't go near those heathenish preachers. Our lips keep knowledge, and you shou'd seek the law at our mouth, for we are the messengers of the Lord of hosts.* But, like one apprehensive that this calumny was too bare-fac'd, you add in the next words, *I don't charge you with this meaning, tho I believe any impartial man wou'd judge it to be so from the connection.* Very kind, charitable, and consistent indeed! Why must this be interpreted as my meaning? Why must it be charg'd as such, and then retracted, and in the same breath made to rebound again; except that it may stick at last, and fix the ill impression upon the reader's mind? Accordingly you go on, with a supposition that I intended it, to chastise, and, in a manner, menace me for it. What else can be the meaning of the unfriendly run in the following words, about the design of my *exclamations, and groans, &c.* which I had occasion to consider under the head of your charity, in pag. 8. All this is so very unworthy, that (as has likewise been observed) your following inconsistent wishes for my success are too thin a covering, for any not to see thro' the gilding: The whole that I have said of this hitherto, might have been as well cast under the head of your *christian charity*; but, as it is likewise an injurious misrepresentation, I chose to place it here; and that especially for the sake of what I am going further to observe about it.

Ibid.

To give all the advantage you cou'd to this masterly stroke, you make it an inference from your *mistaken* sense of some of my premises, *leaving out* the rest. You put it in these words. *This inference, as it stands in connection with your premises,*

Ibid.

premises, is thus : Since the greatest number of preachers seem contented to lay Christ aside, since they wave, banish and despise all that is peculiar to Christ, since they urge moral duties upon principles and views suited to the temper and sentiments of an heathen, and pay no more regard to Christ, than if they had nothing to do with him, oh melancholy symptom ! oh threatening omen ! since the case is thus, with the greatest number of preachers ; therefore thirdly, let it be your concern to use and improve the preaching of Christ : i. e. come to me and my friends, &c. Nothing can be a more unfair and partial representation of the premises, from whence you draw this conclusion ; or more forced than the conclusion it self drawn even from your own premises. None of the premises, in the strained sense you have put upon them, are mine, as may appear hereafter ; and if they were mine, they are far from being *all* the premises of my inference. My inference was from the whole that had been said to recommend preaching Christ, as the very words themselves evidently intimate, viz. *if ministers are to preach Christ, the people are to hear him preached ; the work is relative, and the duty of one infers the duty of the other* *. The premises then were all the seven arguments that had been offered to enforce the duty of preaching Christ : But you, like the scholar and the gentleman, leave out *fix*, & pick a few sentences out of the seventh, which you stretch beyond their meaning, and call them my premises ; and then you stretch the conclusion still wider than the premises, even according to your own way of stating them, as every one may see by comparing them together. Is not this fair disputation ? Is it not according

* See the sermons, 1st edit. pag: 266. 2d edit. pag. 85.

to all just rules of *logick*, to put more into your conclusion, than even your self had put into your premises?

There are several other misrepresentations, either too trifling, or too near a-kin to those that have been already observ'd, to be further taken notice of. And there are still many behind, that more immediately relate to the *state of the question* about preaching Christ, and to your *charge of uncharitableness* upon me, which may be consider'd under those heads respectively, without breaking in too much upon the thread of discourse: and therefore thither I shall refer the remarks that may be proper to be made on them, as occasions offer.

For a conclusion of this head, I am unwilling to say to you, as you do to the *author of the grounds*, &c. *Can this author be ignorant that such a representation——is false, and injurious? and can any one that reads it, help suspecting very great dishonesty, and insincerity in him that makes it**? How far this may be turn'd upon your self, the world will judge. I am very backward to go into suspicions, even where the evidence is too strong: and therefore shall only say, I think it evident beyond suspicion, that your multiply'd misrepresentations have proceeded from a temper of mind, that has hinder'd a due advertency to equal justice and christian charity. I am glad I have so far done with this unpleasant part of my province. But my way is now more open to the principal points, you professed to have in view, relating to the *state and defence of the Scripture-notion of preaching Christ*, and to *my charges against my brethren*. We will therefore proceed to

* *Vindication of the christian religion*, pag. 163.

S E C T. IV.

Fourthly, *The scripture-notion of preaching Christ.*

YOU begin this with exceptions against my distinguishing it into the way of *greater latitude and restriction*: You allow my notion of the latitude-way to be *good and just*, till I come to speak of considering the things I had mention'd in their reference to Christ: But this displeases you, who say, you don't very well understand the reason or pertinence of my caution, which was this, 'That to bring all these with any propriety under the denomination of preaching Christ, they must be consider'd in their reference to him, that he may be interwoven with them, and appear to be concern'd in them; and they must not be preach'd with the air of an heathen moralist, or Platonick philosopher, but with the spirit of a minister of Christ;' For you can't conceive how any man can preach upon the gospel-peculiarities, &c. with the air of an heathen moralist, or Platonick philosopher, &c. But preaching with the air of a heathen moralist or Platonick philosopher, if understood with relation to the peculiarities of the gospel, don't suppose that those philosophers preach'd upon any of these peculiarities; but only that a minister may possibly preach them in such a manner as shall make them look more with the air of Platonick philosophy, than of real christianity. This I take to have been antiently the case of the *Gnosticks, Ebionites*, and some others, that wore the christian name, who gave a Platonick turn to several articles of the gospel; and did not preach them with that gravity, humbleness of mind, and unaffected regard

to all just rules of *logick*, to put more into your conclusion, than even your self had put into your premises?

There are several other misrepresentations, either too trifling, or too near a-kin to those that have been already observ'd, to be further taken notice of. And there are still many behind, that more immediately relate to the *state of the question* about preaching Christ, and to your *charge of uncharitableness* upon me, which may be consider'd under those heads respectively, without breaking in too much upon the thread of discourse: and therefore thither I shall refer the remarks that may be proper to be made on them, as occasions offer.

For a conclusion of this head, I am unwilling to say to you, as you do to the *author of the grounds, &c.* *Can this author be ignorant that such a representation——is false, and injurious? and can any one that reads it, help suspecting very great dishonesty, and insincerity in him that makes it**? How far this may be turn'd upon your self, the world will judge. I am very backward to go into suspicions, even where the evidence is too strong: and therefore shall only say, I think it evident beyond suspicion, that your multiply'd misrepresentations have proceeded from a temper of mind, that has hinder'd a due advertency to equal justice and christian charity. I am glad I have so far done with this unpleasant part of my province. But my way is now more open to the principal points, you professed to have in view, relating to the *state and defence of the scripture-notion of preaching Christ, and to my charges against my brethren.* We will therefore proceed to

* *Vindication of the christian religion*, pag. 163.

S E C T. IV.

Fourthly, *The scripture-notion of preaching Christ.*

YOU begin this with exceptions against my distinguishing it into the way of *greater latitude and restriction*: You allow my notion of the latitude-way to be *good and just*, till I come to speak of considering the things I had mention'd in their reference to Christ: But this displeases you, who say, you don't very well understand the reason or pertinence of my caution, which was this, ' That to bring all these with any propriety under the denomination of preaching Christ, they must be consider'd in their reference to him, that he may be interwoven with them, and appear to be concern'd in them; and they must not be preach'd with the air of an heathen moralist, or Platonick philosopher, but with the spirit of a minister of Christ; ' For you can't conceive how any man can preach upon the gospel-peculiarities, &c. with the air of an heathen moralist, or Platonick philosopher, &c. But preaching with the air of a heathen moralist or Platonick philosopher, if understood with relation to the peculiarities of the gospel, don't suppose that those philosophers preach'd upon any of these peculiarities; but only that a minister may possibly preach them in such a manner as shall make them look more with the air of Platonick philosophy, than of real christianity. This I take to have been antiently the case of the *Gnosticks, Ebionites*, and some others, that wore the christian name, who gave a *Platonick* turn to several articles of the gospel; and did not preach them with that gravity, humbleness of mind, and unaffected regard

regard to the glory of Christ, and with that simplicity of gospel-style and sense, which make up the spirit or temper of a minister of Christ ; so that, taking the passage in this sense, there was no room for all the ridicule you have flung upon it, much less for your *praying God to give me a better spirit* ; since I was there speaking, not of what is the practice of any minister, but only of what goes into the notion of preaching Christ.

But I will be so frank as to own, that, as far as I can recollect, my view in those words lay another way, and had a relation to the gospel *improvements of natural light and principles* : These I had just before spoke of, as going into the latitude-way of preaching Christ, together with all its *glorious peculiarities of the supernatural and incomprehensible kind* ; as each of these may, one way or other, be referred to him. Then I add, but to bring *all* these, that is the *improvements of natural light and principles*, as well as other things, with any propriety under this denomination, they must be consider'd, *according to their respective natures or kinds*, in their reference to Christ, &c. *

Why you left out these words, *according to their respective natures or kinds*, I cannot say. But they plainly show, that every one of *all* these things were not consider'd in the same sort of reference to Christ ; and that therefore it was only the *improvements of natural light and principles*, that I intended to say must not be preach'd with the air of an heathen moralist, or *Platonick* philosopher ; but that according to the nature or kind of these, which is different from that of the peculiarities of the gospel, they must be preach'd with a reference to Christ, to bring them with

* See the sermons, 1st edit. pag. 227, 228. 2d edit. pag. 48, 49.

any propriety under the denomination of preaching him. The nature of the things carries this meaning; and I shou'd think common sense might understand it. I have likewise so evidently explain'd this sense in another place, which you have taken a great deal of pains to examine, that one wou'd think you cou'd not easily have gone into an apprehension, as if it related to the *peculiarities of the gospel*, as well as to the *improvements of natural light and principles*. For I there speak particularly of the *religion of nature*, and of *moral duties*, as the things that are *managed* by some without a *reference to Christ* *. Your poor triumphs, founded upon your unfriendly way of stating this case, are beneath my notice. However, you are at last so good as to say, that *as pag 5. to moral duties you entirely agree with me, that when they are preached, they ought to be enforc'd by motives and obligations taken from Christ, &c.* But this I shall have occasion to review, when I come to state your notion of preaching Christ.

You next proceed to what I call the more *restrictive* way; i.e. the more *direct* and *immediate* way of preaching Christ: And you will have it, that this is so much the same with the other, that it is a *distinction without a difference*. You are *pag 7.* very sanguine in your triumphs upon this head, and think these two are *individually the same thing*; *Ibid.* and that they *do actually coincide, and have both pag 9.* *exactly the same latitude, and are equally restrictive*; and that *neither method contains any thing that the other wants, nor wants any thing that the other hath*. But your mistake lies principally here: The *latitude* and *restrictive* way relate not so much to *intirely different subjects*, as to a difference in the *principal subject* of the discourse, and a different

* See the sermons, 1st edit. pag. 262. 2d edit. pag. 81, 82.

way or manner of preaching upon it. The same things that are said concerning Christ, when he is made the *principal* and professed subject of the discourse, will be the *restrictive* way of preaching him; which, if they are only brought in *incidentally*, by way of inference, motive and the like, when something else is the principal subject, will be preaching him in the *latitude-way*: and the same things that spring out of a direct consideration of Christ in his person, and office-characters, will be preaching him in the restrictive way; which when the minister is principally considering them, in their own nature, and only takes occasion to show in some part of his discourse, that they have a reference to Christ, and what that reference is, will be the latitude-way of preaching him. I a little wonder how this could slip you, when my interpretation of the *restrictive-way* is, *This may be called a more direct and immediate way of preaching him*: And in the explication of the *latitude-way*, I have these words: *Whatever is the immediate subject of the discourse, it may be called preaching Christ, if it is manag'd in such a manner as shews his concern in it, and leads our thoughts either to the glory of his person and offices, or to his kingdom of providence and grace* *.

Suppose, for instance, *providence* were the principal or immediate subject of my discourse, and in the management of it I take opportunities, as they offer, to show that this providence lies in the hands of Christ, and so refer it up to him. This is a different way of preaching Christ, than if I was to be directly and principally discoursing on the *authority* that is lodg'd in his hands, and to bring in the dominion of providence, as a part

* See the sermons, 1st edit. pag. 229, 232. 2d edit. pag. 49, 53.

of that authority, and was all along to consider it as a providence exercis'd by him. The first is preaching Christ in the *latitude* of the expression; and the second, in the *restrictive* way. Or, to come to the instances, which you have singled out on purpose to show their coincidence, there is surely a difference between preaching in the *latitude*-way, the *whole compass of the christian religion*, inclusive of every doctrine, whether of importance to salvation or no, *consider'd in its reference to Christ*; and preaching in the *restrictive* way the *whole method of divine wisdom and grace in* pag. 7: *the salvation of sinners by him*, under the formal notion of its being that method, and with a particular consideration of it as such. You add, that the *preaching up the necessity of good works, or of all* pag. 8. *christian virtues, must be preaching Christ in the more restrictive way, as truly as preaching upon the person and mediation of Christ, because the apostle tells us, That we are God's workmanship created in Christ Jesus to good works, which God hath before ordain'd that we shou'd walk in them, Eph. 2. 10. According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy, and without blame before him in love, Eph. 1. 4.* But there is a difference between preaching *professedly* concerning Christ, as God's eternal purposes relate to him, and as the work of the new creation is founded in him; and preaching about the *necessity* of good works, as the principal subject of the discourse, and only *occasionally* referring them up to him, as God has chosen us to them, and as they are founded in him. Besides, what signifies the *apostle's* telling us *we are created in Christ Jesus to good works, &c.* unless in your preaching you tell us so too? What he says will not make your preaching the *necessity* of good works preaching Christ, unless you preach them as the apostle has taught you: And yet you think there is nothing more needful

to make preaching the necessity of good works, preaching Christ as directly, as preaching upon his person and mediation is so, than that the apostle hath said, *we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to good works, &c.*

pag. 8. 9.

You go on to recite some more of my particular instances of preaching Christ in the restrictive and direct way; and after you have mention'd them, appeal to any man of common understanding, whether those expressions don't take in every thing that my account of preaching Christ in the latitude-way doth? I join issues in the appeal to those that shall please to review them, whether there is not a difference between them, as you go over them again in the following words? *All the noble improvements of natural light and principles by the christian religion, which belong to the latitude-way, relate to the increase of that kind of light by the christian revelation: But the equality and subordination of the Son, which belong to the restrictive way, have no foundation in natural light: And the royalties of Christ, his dominion over all, his judging the world, and the high regards of duty, &c. that we owe him, as they are relative particularly to Christ, are no part of natural light and principles. Moreover, preaching on Christ's royalties, &c. is setting out his characters as king of the church, and as the great Lord and judge of the world; but this is different from preaching upon the laws of his kingdom and government, whilst an explication of what those laws are in themselves, is the principal subject of the discourse.*

pag. 9.

Your last instance only shows that some things, which I have mentioned in the restrictive way, are included in the latitude way. I say, the latitude-way relates to every doctrine, institution, precept, and promise of Christ. And you say, *can I preach of these things without preaching of his divine and*

Ibid.

and office-titles, his peculiar fitness for the redemption of his church, and the regards of duty, gratitude, and love, that he deserves and demands from us, which I had put into my restrictive way of preaching him? I allow I cannot; and own that these things, in the restrictive way, will be contain'd in some doctrine, institution, precept, or promise of Christ. But every doctrine, &c. goes farther than these things, under the special considerations they are there spoken of. Where then is the coincidence? The very notion of my restrictive way, as you have stated it, supposes that it is included in, or is in some respects more restrained than, the latitude-way, like a *species* and its *genus*. And is there no difference between their having both *exactly the same latitude*, and pag. 9. one being included in the other? You several times speak of *doctrines* and *precepts* as distinct; and yet you must allow that precepts are included in doctrines, and therefore don't coincide, one being of greater latitude than the other.

But, if after all, you will still insist upon it, that the things I have mention'd, as belonging to the restrictive way, are exactly commensurate to every doctrine, institution, precept and promise of Christ, of what nature or kind soever, I must then bring you back to the other ground of the distinction, which relates to the *different way* of treating of these things respectively; and to what is the *principal, direct, and professed* subject of the discourse; and that will set all right again. And thus the apostle Paul, in the direct restrictive way, preached the doctrine of justification in his epistles to the *Romans* and *Galatians*, and preached it, in the latitude of the expression, in some others of his epistles.

You yourself, at another time, have insensibly slid into this very way of distinguishing the method

pag. 37.

thod of preaching upon the same subjects, under the heads of *doctrinal* and *practical* points; where you say, *some subjects and circumstances may lead ministers to have the principal part of their sermons upon doctrinal points, and at the close to enforce practice by a proper inference. Other circumstances may lead them to insist more largely on a purely practical subject, on a precept or duty plainly commanded by Christ, and in the application to enforce it by christian principles.* Now let me ask you, is not the first of these a more *restrictive* way of preaching upon *doctrinal* points, than the second? and the second a more *restrictive* way of preaching on purely *practical* subjects, than the first? And in the first of these, are not *practical* subjects preached? and in the second, are not *doctrines* preached in the greater *latitude* of the expression? Apply this to preaching Christ with respect to things, that more immediately concern him; and then with respect to things, that may and ought to be one way or other referred to him; and the distinction stands clear between the more *restrictive* way, and the way of greater latitude in preaching him.

To conclude this, the *Apostle* seems to me, among other things, to lead our thoughts to these two ways of preaching Christ, where he says,
 1 Cor. 3. *Other foundation can no man lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ. Now if any man build upon this foundation, gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble: every man's work shall be made manifest.* My present design is not to consider this text with regard to the distinction of doctrines into those that are, and are not fundamental, but only with regard to the distinction of the *restrictive* and *latitude* way of preaching Christ. By *Jesus Christ* in this place, is apparently meant either Christ himself, or the doctrines

trines that relate to his person, and office-characters, as the foundation of the church, or of the christian faith: And by the *gold, silver, &c.* are as plainly meant other doctrines, that have a reference to this foundation, but are not the foundation itself: For the apostle speaks of the relation that is between these and Christ, or between these and the doctrines that immediately concern him, in a way answerable to the relation that is between the superstructure and foundation of a house. But these are distinct things, tho they have a relation to one another, and are closely connected together. Now preaching Christ, as a foundation relative to the superstructure, is the more *direct* way, and preaching other doctrines, as a superstructure relative to this foundation, is the more *latitude-way* of preaching him.

I suppose enough hath been offered to clear up, and support the distinction between these two ways of preaching Christ. And now I hope I may venture to say, without a sneer, *a difference* pag. 9. *it seems there must be, and I indeed intended one.* But what you mean in your next words, that *I* Ibid. *have a design to answer by it, and some choice observations to make upon the restrictive way of preaching Christ,* I am not able to determine. But it seems you have some observations to make upon it; how *choice* they are let others judge.

The *first* is about the frequent use of the name pag. 10. *Christ.* Your indecencies relating to this, and several other things under this head, have been already considered. But you say, you can't easily pag. 11. *conceive how I or any man living can preach one doctrine or precept of Christ, without bringing in his name into the discourse.* And yet, not very consistently with this, you elsewhere say, *it is possible Christ may be preach'd, without ever mention-*
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pag. 17. *ing his name. And in the very page we are examining, you ask me, How will you bring in the name of Christ, and make it reign and triumph, when you are explaining the nature and obligations of sobriety, chastity? &c. Here again in like consistence with your design in this question, about obligations to sobriety, &c. you add what I think is enough to answer it, and that is, that virtue should be enforced from the authority, example, death, and terrors of the Lord. Is here no room then to bring in the name of Christ? This is preaching Christ in the latitude-way; tho I should not scruple to add still farther enforcements taken from him, as his honour is concerned in virtue, and as a profession of his name is vain, and all pretences to an interest in him are inconsistent claims without it.*

pag. 12. *Your second observation proceeds to what you truly say is of more importance than the use of a mere word, and that is my principal meaning, as you apprehend it, of preaching Christ more directly, or in the restrictive sense, viz. the preaching upon some particular parts or doctrines of christianity.—And here you apprehend that, if I have any meaning, I must mean one of these three things; either (1.) Preaching the doctrines of Christ, as opposed to his precepts. Or, (2.) Preaching some peculiar doctrines or precepts exclusive of others, or more statedly than others. Or, (3.) Preaching the gospel according to my scheme of it, or manner of explaining it.*

As to all these, I need only refer to what I have already said under the head of misrepresentation, to shew that they are so very unfairly put, as to mislead the mind of the reader into an apprehension, as if I opposed the doctrines of Christ to his precepts, so as to neglect them; or confined preaching Christ to the restrictive way, or to some particular doctrines to the exclusion

clusion of others, or to my own way of thinking in all the parts of the gospel-scheme. But you will give me leave to add, that there are some *precepts*, as well as doctrines, which belong to the *restrictive* way of preaching him, even all those where he is the direct and immediate subject spoken of, such as commands about *coming to him*, or *believing in him*, *growing in the knowledge of him*, *loving, obeying, serving, and following him*, and *honouring him even as we honour the Father*, and the like; and that all other sorts of precepts belong to the *latitude-way* of preaching him, when, as I have represented at large, care is taken to give them their proper evangelical reference to him. And therefore your *three* constructions of my meaning, and *six* particulars under the *first* of them, *recommended to my calm and serious consideration* pag. 15. are nothing to the present purpose, any otherwise than, as you have there intermingled the most that you have said, to state and defend your own notion of preaching Christ.

I have already under the former heads taken notice of several exceptionable things, relating to doctrines, and other points, that run thro' these parts of your letter; and the best method I can think of, to do justice to the rest, as far as they relate to the argument about *preaching Christ*, is, as well as I can collect it, to state and examine your notion, which will likewise give me an opportunity farther to clear the *scripture*-notion about it.

In order to come at your state of the question, I shall consider, (1.) How far your notion agrees with mine, as to the reference that our preaching ought to have to Christ. And, (2.) How far you carry your notion of preaching him beyond mine. I shou'd have been apt to have called the *first* of these your *restrictive*, and the *second*

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your *latitude*-way of preaching him : But you will make no distinction, and will call this last as restrictive a way of preaching him as any other. And certainly you ought to have the liberty of expressing your own thoughts in your own terms, and of calling them by what names you please. I will begin with

1. *Your notion of preaching Christ, as far as it agrees with mine in the reference it ought to have to him.*

I allow, you sometimes bring into your notion of preaching him, preaching of his incarnation, birth, life, death, resurrection, and offices ; of his ascension, intercession, and coming to judgment ;
 pag. 72. and of sinners acceptance of, and compliance with his
 pag. 40— method of salvation from sin and misery, of which
 42. he is the author, and the like. You likewise agree
 pag. 37. that good works should be pressed upon christian views
 pag. 5. and principles, and by motives and obligations taken from Christ, and from the promise of the holy spirit, and God's readiness to grant it to all that sincerely ask it ; tho I don't remember you any where speak of the necessity of that assistance : Pardon me, if
 pag. 21. I have overlook'd it. And you speak of duty, repentance, and obedience, as pleasing to God, or as thro' Christ they derive the favour and approbation of
 pag. 10. God towards men ; and say, you are for introducing Christ's name, and the doctrines of his gospel, into all our publick discourses.

I own that in these instances you speak of preaching concerning Christ, and with a reference to him : But as I never said or thought, tho you suppose it to be my meaning, that preaching Christ is to be confined to preaching the gospel just in my way, according to my scheme and manner of explaining it ; so I am far from thinking
 pag. 38. that 'tis every man's preaching the peculiar distinguishing
 pag. 48.

guishing notions of his party, any farther than he is of *Christ's party*, and his notions agree with his mind and will in his word. I believe Christ is every way much better preach'd by many of my brethren than by myself; and that among them, whom I take to be of *his party*, there are several that differ in their sentiments from me, about some branches of the concern we have with him in our religion, and yet preach him much more, and much better than others of them do. They and I may differ in some points relating to Christ, and yet there may be others, as much or more important, in which we agree; and with regard to these, they may preach him much better than I can pretend to. If therefore we are not in the same way of thinking as to the less important points, I should rejoice to have us all unite in preaching Christ with frequency, with open evidence, and to the best advantage we severally can. And where we differ, we must be faithful to the best light we have, or can get, and recommend each other to the guidance and grace of Christ, and bear with one another in love. But every honest man, on both sides, can't but think that, as far as Christ is preached in a way, contrary to what he believes to be the truth of the gospel concerning him, he is so far not rightly preached.

And here I am as apprehensive as you, Sir, that *we may not intirely agree* about the particular way of preaching him, even in what I shou'd call your restrictive sense; and yet I hope thus far we are agreed, that preaching even upon the *birth, life, death, resurrection and offices of Christ, &c.* in Mr. *Woolston's*, or the *Socinian Scheme*, is not for the greatest part, at least, preaching Christ according to the scripture-notion of it. But as to the particulars, which I have but now recited from your letter, as going into what I

shou'd call your restrictive way of preaching Christ; most of these are represented in such a defective manner, and some of them, either in the same or other places, in what I apprehend to be so wrong a light, and other things are so unhappily jumbled together with them, that to me they seem, either to leave out some considerable branches of the gospel, or to make another gospel, as far as they go, different from that, which Christ and his Apostles preached.

'Twou'd carry me into a length of controversy beyond reasonable bounds, to go into all the particulars of this sort, which you have interspersed in many places, and called preaching Christ. And as you have therein sometimes only misrepresented my account of things, under pretence of explaining them for me; and at other times have only opposed bare assertions, with a positive air, against mine, without any proof of your own, or confutation of mine: So I don't think my self concerned, nor do the laws of disputation require it in a defensive argument, to enter into a particular consideration of them, any further than I have already done it, wherever you have offer'd any thing to support them, and sometimes even when you have *only* affirm'd them, especially under the head of *misrepresentation*. I shall therefore content my self with referring thither, and to the account given in my sermons themselves at large about preaching Christ, both as to its object and acts, and to what of course will cast further light upon it, when I come to examine your laxer notion of preaching him, and to settle the scripture-notion in opposition to it: The reader upon the whole will easily judge between us.

Only one thing further I can't well avoid taking special notice of here, and that is, that even in what I should call your restrictive way of preaching

preaching him, you seem very much, if not wholly, to leave out the *person of Christ* from bearing a part in it. I have searched, but can't find one place, where you mention his *person*, as the subject of preaching him, unless where you speak of it in my words; and then it is either without showing whether, or how far you approve of it; or else with lessening turns upon it. If it is any where in your remarks, by way of approbation, and I have hapned to overlook it, I am heartily sorry for it. What I think looks most this way is, where you tell me, the *doctrines* pag. 4. *of the trinity and incarnation, &c. are subjects you have often preach'd on.* But, as nothing is said about what you preach'd on those subjects or doctrines, one can't easily tell by those expressions, how far you reckon the *person of Christ* a proper subject to be preach'd upon.

But I can be more positive, that in several places you have spoke, in my apprehension, not very favourably about preaching upon it.

When you speak of *enforcing moral duties by motives and obligations taken from Christ*, your interpretation is, *such motives and obligations as Christ* pag. 5. *and his apostles have set before us.* When I speak of giving an evangelical turn to moral duties, and interweaving *Christ* with them, you say you *humblly conceive I don't mean it of his person* (as pag. 6. *if he had nothing to do in that affair*) *but of the great arguments and sanctions of his religion and gospel.* With the same view, you give us as wonderful a criticism, as I think I ever met with; saying, *what are the things of Christ, the τα ρεγα* pag. 40. *του Χριστου, but the doctrines and precepts of Christ?* I believe most *Grecians*, except my remarker, wou'd have translated it *the things concerning Christ.* But that wou'd have made *Christ* to be the *subject*, as well as the author of those things, and

- pag. 41. and therefore wou'd not so well have served the critick's turn. *Believing in Christ, and coming to him, are with you only acknowledging his mission from God, and our hearty compliance with the design of his gospel.* When I speak of publishing, proposing and recommending *Christ* to persons acceptance, you say, *I can mean nothing more, according to my own explication, than publishing, &c. the gospel.*
- pag. 46. When I say that *Christ* must be proposed to sinners and believers, you say, *I mean in reality the proposing the gospel to them for their acceptance and continued obedience.* And the considerations I offer to show why ministers of the gospel shou'd preach *Christ*, you say *are only considerations to shew them why they shou'd preach the gospel.* When I speak of *Christ* as a subject truly excellent, and every way worthy to be preached, you swop the terms, and, in your way of interpretation
- Ibid. say, *undoubtedly christianity is so, and every way worthy to be preached.*
- pag. 53.

- Ibid. And still further to clear your drift, in all these interpretations of things that more immediately relate to *Christ* himself, you add, that *what I say of the wonder and songs of angels is true; but pray what did they wonder at, and sing songs of praises for? Was it for the name Christ, or was it merely for the person of Christ?* This looks, as I have before had occasion to observe, as if his *person* were in your account no part of their wonder and their song. And to shut up this, you, with a supercilious air, reflect on what I had said about *expatiating on the noble subject* in the following
- pag. 54. words, *But they must be very wide thoughts indeed, that can expatiate upon the bare name or person of Christ, irrespectively to the doctrines and truths concerning him, and delivered by him. Even your genius wou'd be at a loss to entertain it self here,*
and

and the farther you looked into it, you wou'd be covered with deeper darkness instead of discovering new rising glories.

Your only refuge here must lie, as far as I see, in this phrase, *irrespectively to the doctrines and truths concerning him, and deliver'd by him.* But, if we may judge of the import of this phrase, by the explications you every where give of what you mean by *doctrines and truths concerning him*, as often as you speak of them, they, in your sense of things, relate to his offices, and performances, and the like; and not to the *person* of Christ. Now I leave every one to judge whether, in this way of explaining and reflecting upon the things, that immediately relate to *Christ himself*, Mr. Chandler don't, in great measure at least, if not wholly, exclude his *person* from our concernment in preaching him; or at best whether, if you include it, 'tis not in such a loose, inaccurate, and covert way, that none can certainly tell whether you design it or no.

For my own part, I with wonder and adoration own, that there are incomprehensible and unsearchable glories in his divine and complex person God-man: For which reason, I suppose, you are prejudic'd against speaking much about it. And I as freely own with all humbleness of mind, that among the numerous glories, that are in part discover'd in the gospel concerning his adorable *person*, my genius is too low, and every way incompetent to set them out in their proper lustre, or to expatiate upon them as they deserve. But how astonishing is it to hear one, that calls himself a minister of Christ, speak so contemptibly of the *angels wonder and praise for the person of Christ*, and of *expatiating on his person*, and *entertaining one's thoughts with its glories*,

as if these were not worth our notice in all the knowables concerning him!

What! is there no glory in his character as the *Son of God*, and his being the only *proper* person pitched upon by the eternal Father for the redemption of the church? or in his *own free and gracious willingness*, in his acceptance of that trust, and engagement in eternal transactions with the Father about it, and coming in the fulness of time to discharge it? Is there no glory to be seen or spoken of, in the wonderful *constitution* of his person God-man, in his condescension as God therein to man, and in the honour he therein put upon man? Is no *personal* glory to be seen in all the infinite perfections of his divine nature, and in all the matchless purity and lovely qualities of his human nature, as they are united in him? Are there no glories of God to be seen in his *person*, who is the representative image of God to us, *the brightness of the Father's glory, and the express image of his person*? Is there no glory in his visible appearances as the *Jehovah* of *Israel*, under the old testament? No glory in his *fitnesses and capacities* for his office-work, as a *Person* divinely qualify'd for it in himself, and enriched with the unction of the holy spirit? No glory in the infinite *dignity* that his *person* gives to his sacrifice, and the sure *efficacy* that it gives to all his offices and administrations? No glory in his person as the *object*, on the account of his own divine perfections, of all the adoration, worship, faith, love, and obedience of men and angels; and as *design'd* to be made to appear glorious in himself by the whole of the gospel-dispensation? And is there no glory in the illustrious *exalted* state of his *person* at the Father's right hand, where crouds of angels surround him with prostrate reverence? And no glory redounding

dounding to his *person* in the whole of our redemption and salvation by him; or in the execution of his offices now, and when he shall come to judge the world at the last day?

Are all these things, and more than I am able to sum up, so worthless, so contemptible and mean, as to be left out, or to be but now and then at most slightly touch'd upon, in our preaching Christ? Are not these sufficiently revealed, and made so far plain in the gospel, as to bear a part in our holy ministrations concerning him, and to open a scene for our solemn admiration, and even for our thoughts to expatiate upon him? Did not God design a *personal* glory to his eternal Son in the whole of the mediatorial scheme? And is not the advancement of Christ's *personal* glory, and of the glory of the Father in him, the ultimate end of a gospel ministry? The Lord keep me from overlooking or neglecting these glories. I believe they will one day appear to be exceeding awful and entertaining. And I cannot think that Christ is preached, as he ought to be, if all, or most of these things concerning his *person* are suppress'd.

Having thus far taken a view of your account of preaching concerning Christ, or preaching with a reference to him, which I shou'd have called your restrictive-way of preaching him: We will go on to consider,

2. *How far you carry your notion of preaching Christ beyond mine.*

In order to find out this, I have collected the following passages from many others of the like strain, as a specimen of this part of your notion about it. In your reflections on my account of preaching Christ you say, *Whatever can be said of our blessed* pag. 15.
Lord under the characters of the Son of God, and the

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Christ,

- Christ, of the adorable constitution of his person, of his office-capacities, of prophecies, types and figures, (which I had spoken of) is no more directly preaching Christ, or preaching the things peculiar to, and that are conversant about Christ, than preaching about repentance and good works, of every thing that is virtuous and praise-worthy: because the same gospel that contains the doctrines, contains and inculcates the precepts also, and makes them equally fundamental or essential. In short, every precept and command of the gospel as directly and immediately refers to Christ, as the doctrines of his incarnation, sufferings, death, atonement, righteousness, exaltation and advocacy do. In the same gospel as the one are to be found, the other are; and therefore he who preaches upon all in their proper seasons, directly preaches Christ. Preaching against lewdness, murder, hypocrisy, rash censures, injurious names, and the like crimes, is preaching Christ directly, tho the name Christ be not mentioned; if I preach that they are forbidden by his law, and contrary to his express precepts; and if I shew that the command and example of God, and the example and authority of Christ, lead and direct them to the contrary virtues. Again, Preaching Christ in scripture, always means, preaching either the doctrines or precepts of Christ, i. e. preaching christianity in some essential branch or part of it. And, One wou'd think that they who preach on moral duties shou'd not deserve to be charg'd with leaving out the thing, tho they don't name the name; and that when they preach out of the gospel of Christ, they shou'd not be accused of paying no more regard to him, than if they had nothing to do with him. Once more, in answer to what I say about some ministers haranguing on moral duties without reference to Christ, you have these words, I suppose, however, that they preach out of the bible, and tell their people that their text is part of
- pag. 16.
- pag. 17, 18.
- pag. 44.
- pag. 85.
- pag. 76, 77.

of the word of God, and bring now and then a scripture to confirm what they say, and put their hearers in mind that they are under obligation to moral duties, as they regard the honour of God, and wou'd walk worthy their profession as christians. The most heathenish preacher that ever I heard in church or meeting, haranguing on moral duties, said as much as this. And can you not discern a plain reference to Christ in this, and other such like general expressions? — He who preaches on a text out of the new testament, thereby refers his hearers to the authority of Christ. If he presses any single virtue from the pleasure it affords the mind, from any present advantage that attends it, from the natural and intrinsick excellency of the virtue itself, from the consideration of its being lovely, reputable, and of good report; in all this there is a plain reference to the example and doctrine of Christ, because Christ and his apostles recommended virtue with the very self-same motives and arguments. I am quite tir'd with transcribing: Abundance of the like nature might be added; but there needs no more to show your notion of preaching Christ, in what I wou'd call your latitude-way, tho you call it as *directly* preaching him as any other way.

Now let any man of common understanding, judge whether the sum of this account, except one expression, which mentions preaching the example and authority of Christ, is not this? *viz.*

“ That preaching upon any doctrine or precept contained in the christian religion, preaching against any vices condemned by it, or upon any thing virtuous and praise-worthy inculcated in it, because they are become part of Christ's religion, enjoined by his authority, and the text is taken out of the bible, and now and then a scripture is brought to confirm what is preached, is as *directly and immediately* preaching

Christ; as preaching the doctrines of his sufferings, death, atonement, righteousness, exaltation and advocacy, or any thing else that is most peculiar to him." This I think is plainly your notion, as to what I should call your *latitude-way* of preaching Christ. And all this agrees with what you publish'd not long ago on another occasion, where you say, *If natural religion be not part of the religion of Christ, 'tis scarce worth while to enquire at all what his religion is. If it be, then the preaching natural religion is preaching Christ* *. And in another performance, to give us a view of Christianity (the preaching of which you here contend is preaching Christ) you say, *the only design of it is to promote the happiness of societies and individuals, by the practice of universal virtue and goodness, upon the belief of that future state of rewards and punishments, that God by Jesus Christ hath revealed to us* †.

In examining this notion of preaching Christ, we will consider, (1.) The justness and propriety of the expression in this application of it. And, (2.) Whether this is the *scripture-notion* of preaching Christ.

(1.) I shall enquire into the *justness and propriety of the expression in this application of it, or of your saying that this is preaching Christ, and preaching him as directly and immediately, as preaching upon any other things that most peculiarly relate to him.*

It can't, I shou'd think, be reasonably denied but that Christ, his person, offices, performances, characters, &c. are a great part of the subject of the gospel that we are to preach: And I appeal to all christians, tho they may not have searched

* *Knowledge and practice, &c. dedication, p. 8.*

† *Reflections on the conduct of the modern deists, p. 107.*

into the precise meaning of the words where they are used in scripture, Whether, as we have taken the expression of preaching Christ from thence, the term itself, especially when we use it in the *direct and immediate* sense, don't naturally raise in the mind an idea of his being the *subject* of the discourse? And whether preaching any moral precepts contained in his religion, without so much as naming his name in them, or referring them in the preaching some way or other up to him, beyond their being barely enjoined by him, is so *strictly and immediately* preaching him; as it is, when he is made the principal subject, and all along is kept in view? Or indeed, whether, in the common sense of christians, it is preaching Christ at all, tho the text be taken out of the bible? To call this preaching Christ *directly and immediately*, is certainly to alter the use of language; and to leave out the *principal* idea, and put in others, under the terms, different from what they have always stood for; which is to impose upon mankind, and to put them off with a name, that by common custom signifies what is not designed by the speaker when he uses it.

The expression, which is generally understood to be applied to preaching *concerning* Christ, or preaching a system of doctrines in which he is the *principal subject*, can't, with any propriety, much less in the *direct and immediate* sense, be applied to those parts of the system, that entirely leave him out, or to those parts, that are common to his and other religions, suppose for instance, the *Jews, Mahometans and Pagans*. There must surely be something *distinguishing*, as to the things that are preached, to give it such a *distinguishing* denomination, as *preaching Christ*. It must be preaching *concerning* him, or, at least, with

with a reference to him, as well as preaching the things that he hath authorized.

If a messenger were sent to rebels, or other enemies, lying at the mercy of his prince, to proclaim the grace of his master, and enter into a special treaty of peace with them upon that foundation; and he were to talk only of things in his commission, that belong in common to the law of nations: Wou'd this be called *directly and immediately* * preaching his principal? Must he not take notice of his sovereign, and go into the special business of his commission? Must he not enter upon declaring the prince's gracious designs, provisions, and overtures for peace, before he cou'd be said *directly and immediately* to preach him to that people? Or, which comes still nearer to our case, If the prince's son was the mediator and purchaser of that peace, and vested with authority to send this message in his own and his father's name, cou'd the messenger be said *directly and immediately* to preach him, till he came to name him, and to speak of what he had done to procure this peace, and to set the treaty on foot?

To apply it in other instances: Who wou'd ever call reading a brief for charitable uses, or reading a proclamation for suppressing immorality and profaneness, and pressing them respectively upon the people, reading or preaching king *George*? Is this preaching our sovereign

* As in one of the sermons I have shewn that the word *ὑποσχω*, which we render preach, was used among the Greeks in civil and military affairs, and signifies to publish or declare, propose or recommend, it may warrantably be used in this and the following instances; and in such an application of it, every one may easily perceive how it must be understood. See the sermons, 1st edit. p. 226. 240, 2d edit. p. 57, 60.

lord the king, as *directly and immediately*, as the herald doth when he proclaims him? Or shou'd we call preaching even the statute-laws of *Great-Britain*, *directly and immediately* preaching the king, lords, and commons, because they enacted those laws? Or preaching the by-laws of the city of *London*, preaching the lord-mayor, court of aldermen, and common-council, because their authority enjoins obedience to them? How improper wou'd this be, except the laws that are preach'd relate to the enacting and enjoining powers themselves, as the *subjects* of them? And who wou'd ever call preaching the law of nature, which is prior to all human laws, and is interwoven with all governments, *directly and immediately* preaching any particular government, suppose that of *Great-Britain*, *France*, or the *Empire*, &c?

I allow that preaching the several systems of philosophy, which have been set up by their several heads or founders, is, or may be sometimes called preaching those authors respectively. But then the expression is only *figurative*, and it relates to the *peculiar doctrines* of their several systems, even in that figurative sense. But you are so afraid of preaching Christ *properly*, that you had rather substitute the *figurative* way of preaching him; and when you have done that, will cut off even this low and most improper notion of it too. For, tho a minister shou'd leave out the *peculiar doctrines* of Christ's system, you will call the rest, *directly and immediately* preaching Christ still.

There are some common principles of all philosophy, as that the *whole is greater than any of its parts*; and that the *same thing can't be, and not be, in the same sense, at the same time*, &c. Now wou'd

wou'd any one say, that preaching only these principles is *directly and immediately* preaching *Aristotle, Plato, Descartes, or Sir Isaac Newton*, or indeed preaching any of them in any distinguishing sense of the expression? There are likewise principles of natural religion common to the religion of *Moses*, of the heathen moralists, of the *Mahometans*, and of *Christ*; such as that the *divine Being is to be worshipped and served*; and that *truth, justice, and goodness, are to be promoted between man and man, &c.* When therefore one preaches upon these only, is that preaching *Christ directly and immediately*, or in any distinguishing sense of the terms, any more than it wou'd be preaching *Moses, Seneca, Epictetus, Mahomet, or your Confucius*? Or wou'd any one who preaches some of *Mr. Chandler's* principles, that are common principles to all christians with him, be said in the *direct and immediate* sense to preach *Mr. Chandler*?

Besides, the case is still farther different between preaching *Christ*, and preaching any founder of the several sects of philosophy, according to what has been before observed, and may appear more fully hereafter. For *Christ* is not only the author, but likewise the great *subject* of his system, which they were not of theirs. If they had, I doubt, a lecture on their philosophy, that shou'd have entirely left them out, wou'd never have been thought a *direct and immediate* preaching them. This consideration fully answers the only thing that I can find you have said to countenance this way of speaking, which is, that *Moses of old time had in every city them that preached him*; i. e. say you, *not merely the person or name of Moses, but that religion which God establish'd among the Jews by his mediation.* But *Moses* was not

Acts 15.

21.

pag. 45.

not the principal *subject* of that religion, as Christ is of his : And tho reading *Moses's* writings is, by a *figure*, called *reading* him ; yet, I doubt, if some passage in his writings had been only read, as we now a-days do our text, and the whole discourse had been spent without taking any other notice of *Moses*, and without speaking one word of any thing in his religion, that might distinguish it from that of the nations round about the *Jews*, it wou'd hardly have been called preaching *Moses*. Besides, you hereby constructively put *Moses* upon a level with *Christ*, as if he had no higher or nearer concern in his religion than *Moses* had in his. According to this way of talking, we might be said to preach the *apostles*, as well as to preach *Christ*, because what we preach was delivered by them. But I believe it wou'd no more have gone down in their days, for one to have said, I *preach* Paul, another I *Apollos*, I *Cephas*, and I *Christ* ; than for one to say, I *am* of Paul, another, I *of* Apollos, another, I *of* Cephas, and another, I *of* *Christ*. 1 Cor. 12

I suppose you will allow, and even plead, that there is a difference in these instances of Christ and his apostles, because the apostles spoke by his authority, and under the inspiration of his spirit ; so that their doctrines were not properly *theirs*, but *his*. But then you see what your instance of *Moses* wou'd bring you to ; unless you allow his authority to be the same with *Christ's*. Whereas, in reality, his doctrines were no more his own, than the apostles were theirs ; and he was Christ's minister in that dispensation, as the apostles were in the other : And in writing his books, he was under the inspiration, or direction and government of Christ's spirit, as well as they were in writing theirs. And if preaching what

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his inspired servants taught, is preaching Christ, because he by his spirit inspired or conducted them in it; then you must go on a little farther still, and say, That preaching all the histories, chronologies, genealogies, and political, as well as ceremonial laws of the *Jews* in the old testament, are preaching Christ too, because they were written by the inspiration, or under the conduct of his spirit. So that you see nothing can be made of your instance of *Moses's* being read, to serve your turn.

I shall close this with some passages from Mr. *John Jennings's* discourse about preaching Christ, recommended by that preface of Dr. *Watts*, which you have so honourably spoken of to me; and another from Dr. *Bates*, prefix'd to it. "Let the manner of our preaching on any subject, says Mr. *Jennings*, distinguish it from mere discourses on natural religion, by a continual regard to Christ. Whilst a preacher keeps off the peculiarities of the gospel, and says nothing but what the light of nature would also suggest and authorize, give me leave to say, a stranger might possibly doubt whether he is a deist or a christian; the question is like an imperfect mathematical problem, which equally admits of different solutions. Suppose the ghosts of *Paul* and *Seneca* to come mere strangers into an assembly, where one was haranguing the people in this abstracted manner; I am apt to think *Seneca* wou'd claim him as a philosopher of his own sect and religion. Now if *Paul* shou'd also make his claim to him as a minister of Christ, how cou'd the question be decided without allowing *Seneca* to be a preacher of Christ also *?" "He preached Christ crucified, says

* *Discourse of preaching Christ, &c. 2d edit. p. 16. 26, 27.*

Dr. Bates, our only wisdom and righteousness, sanctification, and redemption. His design was to convince sinners of their absolute want of *Christ*, that with flaming affections they might come to him, and from *his fulness* receive divine grace. This is to water the tree at the root, whereby it becomes flourishing and fruitful; whereas the laying down of moral rules for the exercise of virtue, and subduing vicious affections, without directing men to derive spiritual strength by prayer, and in the use of divine ordinances, from the mediator, the fountain of all grace; and without representing his love as the most powerful motive and obligation to obedience, is but *pure philosophy*, and the highest effect of it is but *unregenerate morality* *."

What lies next before us, is to

(2.) Consider, *Whether this notion of your's, is the scripture-notion of preaching Christ.*

'Tis the *scripture-notion* that your title-page sets forth as your professed design; and this is what you seem to aim at in the several scriptures, and scripture-accounts, that you have mention'd to support your own notion about preaching Christ. I shall therefore examine these; and then consider what the scripture farther says of preaching Christ. This I take to be a just and plain method for clearing up the *scripture-notion* about it. And this will shew whether its use of the phrase has any thing to favour what I have called your *latitude-way* of preaching him? Or whether it don't confine the notion to what I have pleaded for, which is, preaching concerning Christ, and with a reference

* Dr. Bates, in his funeral-sermon on Dr. Jacomb.

to him? I shall begin with the scriptures you have alledged, and with what you say upon them, as they lie in order.

pag. 16,
17.

The first I meet with is Christ's famous sermon on the mount, in which you say he taught the multitude the great duties of morality, pressing them to meekness, &c. and then ask, did Christ in this sermon preach Christ or not? But I wou'd ask you, Sir, where is this sermon called *preaching Christ*? That phrase, I think, was not used in scripture (as shall be shown in its proper place) till after his resurrection and exaltation at the Father's right hand. Christ, in the main of this sermon, did not so properly preach himself, as act the character of a prophet, who, amongst other parts of his design, came to expound and enforce the law, and set its true meaning and obligation, spirituality and extent in a just light; and yet he herein so far preached himself, as that, in a very majestick, sovereign, and God-like manner, he asserted things throughout that sermon upon his own authority, with an *I say unto you*, and *verily, verily, I say unto you*, like the Lord of the law. And, in order to convince the Jews of their need of a better righteousness than they had taken up with, and to lead them to apprehensions of the concern they must have with him, he preached himself, as one that came not only to explain and enforce, but to fulfil the law in his own personal obedience; so that till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shou'd in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled. And toward the close of the sermon, he spoke again of himself, with a reference to the concern they shou'd have with him in the future judgment, saying, *Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doth the will of my father which*

Mat. 5. 17,
18.

Mat. 7. 21,
22, 23.

which is in heaven. Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me ye that work iniquity.

You say, in all that sermon you don't find any pag. 17. thing of his equality with, or subordination to the Father, and you don't remember the word *Christ* is once used in it. But methinks his awful God-like way of speaking of himself, of setting aside all false glosses, and of asserting the true sense of the law by his own authority, as Lord of the law, might have led you to some apprehensions about his equality with the Father: Or, if you suppose he there acted only according to the delegated character of a prophet, that must have led your thoughts to his subordination to him: So that which ever way you take it, he certainly spoke of himself, either as equal with, or as subordinate to the Father. And what you say about the word *Christ* not being found in that sermon, is an unbecoming way of trifling, that hath been already taken notice of. But Christ himself, is mentioned in the discourse more than perhaps you apprehended before, and more than your notion makes necessary to the preaching of him.

But his time was not yet come to set himself out in the fulness of his saving characters; nor to give so large a view of them, as he himself afterwards gave in several other sermons or discourses, particularly in those recorded from *John* 4. to the 16th chapter. And tho I am as much for preaching the law in its proper way and order, and as much admire the

John 16.
12, 14.

the blessed preacher in his sermon on the mount, as Mr. *Chandler*; and tho I believe we have there the most excellent exposition of the law, beyond any other whatsoever; yet I can't think that our great Lord therein designed to give us a compleat plan of the evangelical way of preaching, even moral duties, as that was to take place under the fuller light, grace and glory of the gospel-state; any more than that he wou'd confine us to his way of preaching in *parables* concerning himself. He unquestionably preached in the best manner possible to suit the then present state of things; but the apostles after his resurrection, and after the effusion of the spirit, who was to *glorify him*, and to *teach them many things*, that *they were not able to bear* before, took a different course in preaching him, and in preaching moral duties with a reference to him, suitable to the improvements of the gospel-state.

I can't better express my sense of this matter, as to one part of my design in it, than in the words of the author above-mention'd, where he says of preaching Christ;

“ It is a direct imitation of the apostles of Christ: Christ himself, whilst upon earth, preach'd the gospel in parables, in a conceal'd manner, distantly and with reserve: He cou'd not so fully take the advantage of his resurrection, satisfaction, ascension, and the like, not yet done, made, or prov'd: He had many things to say, which his disciples cou'd not then bear; but he declares them afterward by his spirit in his apostles: They, therefore, are the true pattern of our preaching now, after the mystery of redemption is brought to light, and hath its full evidence.”

dence *." And Dr. *Watts* says, " It is evident from many expressions of the evangelists, that it was not the design of Christ in his own lifetime to publish the grace and glory of the gospel in so clear, so distinct, and so compleat a manner, as he design'd to have it publish'd by his apostles, after he was gone to heaven : The design of his own publick ministry was rather to prepare the way for the setting up of his own kingdom in the world, than to set it up in the full glory of it in his own person : According to this view of things, his preaching was formed, *repent ye, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand*, i.e. the gospel-state approaches, or hath approached to you, &c.†"

While, therefore, I have Christ speaking in his apostles, as well as his own excellent personal ministry on earth for my guide, what you tell me, in the close of your descant upon his sermon on the mount, neither pleases nor displeases me, viz. *That to imitate Christ in his way of preaching himself, is my duty, and a greater honour to any man than to imitate any modern head or leader of a party whatsoever.* pag. 18.

Your very next words countenance what I have been saying on this head, with regard to the preaching of *moral duties*, where you add, in a way of transition to further instances, *As Ibid. Christ preached moral duties, so did his apostles*

* Jennings on preaching Christ, &c. pag. 22, 23.

† Sermons, vol. 3. pag. 144. And the doctor offers some reasons why Christ did not teach plainly and publicly some of the chief doctrines of his religion, during his own life upon earth; and refers for others to the author of *Miscellanea Sacra*, who hath elaborately discuss'd this point, and offer'd eight particulars to show the reasons of it, vid. vol. 1. pag. 157—160.

after him, using indeed some additional arguments, after the death and resurrection of Christ, as the circumstances of those they preached to, made it necessary. Here then, by your own acknowledgment, is an addition to Christ's method of preaching moral duties, which is my latitude-way of preaching him. But what if the apostles had left out these additional arguments? Must it have been called, under the gospel-state, preaching Christ still? Or are not these arguments as essential to the christian faith and practice now, as they were then? I hope you will not be afraid to use them, because they were not in Christ's sermon on the mount.

pag. 18.

You go on, *What did Peter's sermon consist of, but proofs of Christ's being the Messiah foretold by the prophets, and a serious exhortation to repentance? And upon occasion of his healing the lame man, he preached the same truth of Christ's being the Messiah, and concluded with the same exhortation to repentance. St. Paul's sermon at Antioch is exactly to the same purpose. All this was preaching Christ in what I call the restrictive-way, as they made his office-character the principal subject, and improv'd it to repentance, and to faith in Christ, the last of which you had like to have forgot, tho it was the professed design of the apostle Paul in his sermon at Antioch. A bare reading their discourses is sufficient to settle this point on my side of the question, as far as it is concerned in them. See Acts 2, 3, 13 chapters.*

Ibid.

Your next instance is, *When he was at Athens he preached against idolatry, exhorting his hearers to repentance, from the consideration of a future judgment by Christ. This was preaching Christ*

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as the great judge of the world, or enforcing repentance from that consideration of him, which is my latitude-way of preaching him, or preaching duty with a reference to him. The apostle likewise, in the close of that verse, preached his resurrection from the dead, as the great argument to bring the Gentiles off from their idolatry to him, and to the acknowledgment of the true God thro' him, *Acts* 17. 31. But you forgot to take notice of that, and of *ver.* 18, where it is said, *he preached unto them Jesus and the resurrection.* Which seems to relate to the doctrine of the resurrection to eternal life thro' Jesus Christ, as well as to Christ's own resurrection from the dead; for the *Sadduces* were grieved that the apostles preached *Act. 4. 2.* thro' Jesus the resurrection from the dead. And this is directly preaching Christ according to me.

You add, *When he preached before the Roman* pag. 48. *governor concerning the faith of Christ, he preached of righteousness and temperance from the same principle of a future judgment.* If from the same principle of a future judgment, then you must own it was of a future judgment by Christ, as you had before express'd it in what you here refer to. And so it will be still preaching Christ, or concerning him; nor is there any room to imagine but that the apostle said many things in his discourse to *Felix* about Christ, which are not there recorded.

But let us look a little into the place. It is said, that, *after certain days, when Felix came* *Acts* 24. *with his wife Drusilla, which was a Jewess, he* 24, 25. *sent for Paul, and heard him concerning the faith in Christ: And as he reason'd of righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come, Felix trembled. The apostle had lately been brought before Felix, as*

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governor

governor of *Judea*, and accused of several things by *Tertullus* in the name of the *Jews*, *ver.* 1—9. And it seems to me, that in his defence of himself against those accusations, *ver.* 10—21, he did not enter into a distinct account of the peculiarities of christianity; but chiefly went upon plain facts, as to his own conduct, and upon such principles as were common to judaism and christianity, and were, in the main, allow'd by the greatest part of the *Jews*, but were more evidently reveal'd, improv'd and confirm'd by *Jesus Christ*. And this was enough for an answer to what they had laid to his Charge. He well understood his natural and civil rights, and that he was not bound to accuse himself; and he had an admirable talent at close reasoning on any point in view; and therefore answer'd only to the things in question, as *Tertullus* had open'd them against him. The like course he took when the cause was afterwards reviv'd, and brought before *Festus*, *Chap.* 25. 8—11. He on these occasions acted the part of a *Roman*, rather than of an *apostle*; and therefore said no more of *Christ* and his Gospel, when he was upon his trial in a court of judicature, than the charge of his enemies oblig'd him to. But *Felix* having heard many rumours of the christian doctrine, which the apostle ordinarily preach'd, but had said little about in his appearance before him, as a *Roman* governor, took an opportunity, *after certain days*, to send for him in a more private way, when his accusers were absent, that he might hear him concerning the faith in *Christ*. He probably did this to gratify his own, and perhaps his wife's curiosity, she being a *Jewess*; that he and she might hear the new doctrine concerning *Christ*, which

which had made such a stir in the world. *Paul*, no doubt, knew the design of his being sent for, and we can as little doubt but that he gladly laid hold of the opportunity to preach Christ to *Felix*, according to that design: Respect to the governor, and zeal for the glorious cause of his Lord and master, cou'd not suffer him to decline it. Accordingly it is expressly said, that *Felix heard him concerning the faith in Christ*, which supposes that *Paul* preach'd concerning that faith; that is, either concerning the doctrine of faith, or the necessity of faith in him; and how could that be without directly preaching Christ?

But; as he knew *Felix's* character for *injustice*, *luxury*, and *incontinence*; and was desirous to strike a conviction of those vices upon his conscience, which was the likeliest method to engage a serious regard to what he preach'd concerning Christ, he took that opportunity to make a close application to him about *righteousness* and *temperance*, or chastity, (*εὐσέβειας*) and to remind him of that judgment to come, in which that very Jesus wou'd be his judge, whom he was preaching to him. And if we may take an estimate of the apostle's discourse to *Felix* concerning *the faith in Christ*, by what he said to *Agrippa*, when with something of the like temper of mind he sent for him, it must be allow'd to be directly preaching concerning Christ, as you may see, if you will please to read that discourse, *Acts* 26. 6—23. In short, as far as I can judge by the historian's way of recording this matter, it stands thus. The apostle's preaching concerning *the faith in Christ*, was the doctrinal part of his discourse; and his reasoning of *righteousness*, *temperance*, and *judgment to come*, was the application. *Felix* heard

the first, like a man of curiosity, with a careless, unconcerned temper of mind. But, when the Apostle came to the application, he touch'd his conscience, and then he trembled. This was *directly* preaching Christ, with a suitable application; and what I take to be the right way of preaching him.

pag. 18.

The same, you say (I suppose you mean the same way of preaching) *may be observed throughout all his letters to particular churches.* And I appeal to every attentive reader, whether all his epistles are not filled with Christ, or with the doctrines concerning him; and whether his most general method is not, after he hath gone thro' the doctrines relating to Christ, and salvation by him, to subjoin exhortations to moral duties, personal and relative, as a sort of application in the close of the epistles. And I heartily wish that way of preaching Christ and duty were more observed in our days.

pag. 19.

You particularly instance in his exhortation to *Titus*, where you say, *after having told him that the grace of God in the gospel teaches us to deny all ungodliness and worldly lusts, and to live soberly, righteously and godly in the present world, he adds, these things speak, and exhort, and rebuke with all authority.* But lest Christ shou'd appear to be concerned in these duties, you leave out the very view of the apostle in these exhortations, which was, that they might *adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things; for the grace of God that bringeth salvation, &c.* And then you skip over two verses, that lie between the words you have quoted, and are flung in by the apostle to enforce the duties, viz. *looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God, and our Saviour Jesus Christ; who*

who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works. These things speak and exhort, &c. see Tit. 2. 10.—15.

But you go on to the next chapter, Put ^{pag. 19.} them in mind to be ready to every good work, to ^{Tit. 3.} speak evil of no man, to be no brawlers, but gentle, ^{1, 2.} shewing all meekness to all men: And this is a faithful saying, and these things I will that thou affirm constantly, that they which have believed in ^{ver. 8.} God might be careful to maintain good works; these things are good and profitable unto men. Here again you hide Christ from our view, and slip over the intermediate Verses, which contain ^{ver. 4, 5,} the noblest principles and motives to obedience, ^{6, 7.} and speak of the kindness and love of God our Saviour toward man, and of the renewing of the Holy Ghost, which is shed on us abundantly thro' Jesus Christ our Saviour: That being justified by his grace, we shou'd be made heirs, according to the hope of eternal life.

There are also, say you, several of the like ^{Ibid.} advices to Timothy. If they are like advices, I have shewn by these, which you say they are like to, that there is more of Christ in them than you wou'd represent. But as you have instanc'd in none of them, their being like these, that we have been considering, is a sufficient answer to what this general reference wou'd suggest concerning them. So that, to take up your words at the conclusion of that paragraph, you can have no warrant from ^{Ibid.} Christ or his Apostles to separate principles and practice in your preaching; and those who do thus may possibly serve a party, but cannot promote the honour and kingdom of our glorious Redeemer. But this you do, while you contend that preaching precepts only, tho without any special reference to Christ, is

is *directly and immediately* preaching him. And this I oppose, whilst I am for improving principles to practice, and am for mingling Christ's doctrines with his precepts, and for preaching duties, as well as privileges, with a reference to him.

pag. 19. As to what you add under your next head, I fully agree with you, that the words of our Lord
 1 Tim. 6. *Jesus Christ, are the doctrine according to godli-*
 3. *ness, and the truth according to godliness; and*
 Tit. 1. 1. *that several of the gospel-principles are called the*
 pag. 20. *mystery of godliness. So that, the whole scheme*
of the gospel is designed to inculcate and promote
the practice of true religion and virtue. Very
true; and that, according to me, is the right
way of preaching Christ: But it is not so, to
preach godliness and virtue, without preach-
ing the doctrines of Christ that lead to them,
and enforce them.

Ibid. The same may be said of what you offer on your following texts, viz. when the apostle speaks of any particular doctrines, he never fails to shew their influence and tendency to carry on the same design. The doctrine of his condescension in becoming man, he improves to humility and lowliness of mind, and to engage men to work out their salvation with fear and trembling, Phil. 2. 3—12. His patience in suffering he inculcates as an argument to promote the same virtue in us, 1 Pet. 2. 19, &c. His submission to death he urges as an argument for our dying to sin; and his resurrection from the dead, as a motive to our walking before God in all newness of life, Rom. 6. 1—23. His ascension to glory, and being seated at his Father's right-hand, he proposes as an argument to repentance, Acts 5. 31. These are all, according to my notion, preaching Christ, as they introduce him into the discourse, and improve

prove the things concerning him unto practice. But in all this roll of scriptures from first to last, there is but one of them, that, I think, calls the things there mentioned *preaching Christ*, which I shall take occasion to consider hereafter, when we come to the use of this phrase in *scripture-language*.

You have nothing more, that relates to the notion of preaching Christ, for between twenty and thirty of the following pages, besides peremptory assertions, unfair insinuations, and your own wrong explications of the meaning of my words, without any colour of argument or pretence to prove any thing, that I have not already taken notice of under the foregoing heads. And there I have said as much, and more, to most of those things, than the argument between us required, in the observations I have made upon them, as well as I cou'd fort them.

But at length you come again to some other scriptures and reasonings, that I own, do relate to preaching Christ. And this brings us directly to the point, that we may search into the *scripture-notion* of it.

You tell me, *that in the first beginnings of christianity, the apostles insisted more especially on the first grand article of it, viz. Christ's being the Messiah, because they were then peculiarly sent to the house of Israel.* This you must acknowledge answers to my *restrictive* way of preaching him. But you seem afraid lest we shou'd have too much of that in our days, by the reason you give for their preaching on his character, as the *Messiah*, viz. *because they were then peculiarly sent to the house of Israel*; as if they were not likewise sent, and did not preach the same doctrine to the *Gentiles*; or as if this were not still an essential

pag. 42. tial part of christianity; and there were no occasion to preach it in this age, tho you elsewhere allow it is an age that has a *turn to infidelity*.

Your first scripture, in the list you are now bringing in, is my text, which speaks of the apostles *preaching Christ in the synagogue, that is, say you, this article of the christian religion, that he is the Son of God*. I hope I have sufficiently shewn in my sermons, that this was preaching Christ in his *divine and office-characters* *: However, even according to your own state of the case, it was preaching him, as to his *office*, in the *restrictive* way I have spoken of. The same was observed in one of the sermons on your next scripture, which speaks with open evidence for itself; viz. *Acts 5. 42. The apostles ceased not to teach and preach Jesus Christ*. pag. 45. *And what that was, say you, we are told ver. 30, 31. viz. preaching that God had raised up Jesus after his crucifixion, and made him a prince and Saviour, to give repentance and remission of sins. And what is this but preaching Christ, or concerning him, in my restrictive way? Thus also you Acts 8. 5, suppose Philip preached Christ to the Samaritans, 32—35. at least he preached him in this manner to the eunuch, when he told him, that Isaiah's prophecy referred to Christ, and foretold his sufferings. Ibid. Agreed. This is still preaching Christ in my restrictive way. Ibid. 'Tis needless, say you, to mention other passages. I believe so too, as to the point you wou'd mention them for, since all you have quoted make directly for my notion of preaching Christ, and against your own, in what I have called your latitude-way.*

* See the sermons, 1st edit. p. 182, &c. 214, &c. 2d edit. p. 7, &c. 35, &c.

However,

However, I will see whether there are any other places in scripture, where this term, *preaching Christ*, or something like it, is used, that may farther help to settle the notion of it with *scripture-evidence*: And here I shall search out all that I can find, besides those that have been just recited from you; and then proceed to two others that you have farther quoted, but cannot come into this list.

To lead my way to this design, I desire it may be observed, that, as far as I find, *preaching Christ* is a phrase no where used in scripture till after his resurrection from the dead, and ascension to glory. I can't meet with this style in any one instance thro' all the *gospels*. I think 'tis known only in the *Acts of the Apostles*, and in their *epistles*; which, you will allow, set out the state of things under the gospel, consequent to Christ's resurrection from the dead, and glorious exaltation at the Father's right hand. And in those writings, where this phrase came into use, it is never applied, as far as I can observe, more than once to any preaching, but to that which was consequent to his exaltation. And even that one instance hath a direct reference to Christ, under his office-character, and is intermix'd with an account of his exalted state, and second appearance to salvation; as you may see by reading the words, which are these. *He shall* Acts 3.20,
send Jesus Christ, which before was preached unto 21, 22.
you: Whom the heaven must receive, until the times of restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets, since the world began. For Moses truly said unto the fathers, a prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you, of your brethren, like unto me; him shall ye hear in all things whatsoever he shall say unto you. It may be doubtful, whether, before preached to them, relates to the times of the

O prophets,

prophets, or to the beginning of the gospel-dispensation : But be that as it will, this was a sort of preaching Christ, that falls directly in with my notion of it in the *restrictive* sense.

All other instances of this style relate to the preaching, that ensued Christ's resurrection, and ascension to heaven. And what doth this intimate ? but that the phrase, in its original use, principally signifies preaching the peculiar doctrines of the gospel *concerning* Christ, as the grand theme of the christian religion, according to the discoveries that have been made of him by the Holy Spirit, who came from our exalted head and Redeemer, according to his promise, on purpose to glorify him :

John 16.
14.

For, says our blessed Lord, *he shall receive of mine, ἐκ τῶ ἐμοῦ, of the things of me, or concerning me, and shall shew them unto you.*

Acts 28.
31.

ingly the apostle explains his own preaching the kingdom of God, to be teaching those things which concern the Lord Jesus Christ, τὰ περὶ τοῦ Κυρίου Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ. It was preaching the things that peculiarly related to him, or the things in which he was the principal subject of the discourse.

Now this is the proper key for opening all the passages that speak of preaching Christ, when the phrase is used with little, and sometimes without any explication in the context : And therefore I shall begin with these, and need do little more than name them.

Acts 11.
20.

It is said, *when the men of Cyprus and Cyrene came to Antioch, they spake unto the Grecians preaching the Lord Jesus.* This is too plain to need a comment.

Acts 19.
13.

And the Jewish exorcists took upon them to call over them which had evil spirits, the name of the Lord Jesus, saying, *we adjure you by Jesus whom Paul preacheth.* Paul's preaching Jesus must, in their apprehensions, be supposed to relate to the person of

of Christ, and to his victorious power and dominion over evil spirits. Again, *If he that* 2 Cor. i. 1 *cometh, preacheth another Jesus whom we have* 4. *not preached.*—Ye might well bear with him. Another Jesus, that is, another Saviour than the apostles preached, who declared, *that there* Acts 4. 12. *is salvation in no other; for there is none other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved.* Farther, God revealed his Son, Gal. i. 16. in the apostle Paul, *that he might preach him among the heathen.* And how he preached Christ among the Gentiles, as the only Saviour of sinners, as the object of their faith, and Lord of their obedience, the *acts* and *epistles* abundantly manifest, and hath been shewn in the sermons upon which you have remarked.

Once more : Some indeed preach Christ even of Phil. i. *envy and strife; and some also of good-will.* The 15—18. *one preach Christ of contention—but the other of love—What then? notwithstanding every way, whether in pretence or in truth, Christ is preached; and I therein do rejoice, yea, and will rejoice.* This must be preaching Christ in some distinguishing way, different from a lecture of morality, or upon principles common to his religion and others. It must be preaching them with a reference to him, or preaching him inclusive of the peculiarities of the gospel concerning him. For in them that envied Paul, as an apostle of Christ, it was such a preaching, as they designed shou'd vie with his, and shou'd sink his character, by setting up their own, as if they were equally eminent with him for preaching Christ : And it was such a preaching, as Christ was glorified by, so far as it related to what was preached concerning him : otherwise the apostle wou'd not have rejoiced in it, whilst he declared, *that for him to live was Christ,* or that ver. 21. Christ was the great end of his life, that he might exalt him ; and that he had no higher

ver. 20.

pleasure, or aim, than that *Christ should be magnified in his body, whether by life or death.*

Acts 17.

2, 3.

But there are other passages that may receive still more light from their contexts; and they are these that follow. *Paul, as his manner was, went in unto the Jews, and three sabbath-days reasoned with them out of the scriptures, opening and alledging, that Christ must needs have suffered, and risen again from the dead. And that this Jesus whom I preach unto you, is Christ.* This is an account of his usual manner, of his stated and customary way, *κατὰ τὸ εἰωθός*, which may relate not only to his preaching first to the *Jews*, but to the way or manner of his preaching to them. And so it is a good clew to guide our thoughts about the manner of his preaching Christ to the *Jews*, wherever it is spoken of. And what did he preach? was it not concerning Christ, opening and alledging, explaining and proving to them, the necessity and reality of his sufferings and resurrection, with the nature, design, and truth of his Messiahship, that he is indeed the Christ, whom God anointed to the office of a Saviour, and whom their antient prophets had foretold and described? Was not Christ the principal subject of this preaching? The consequence of it was, that *some believed*, and others cried out against him and *Silas*, saying, *these that have turned the world upside down, are come hither also.* What cou'd he preach to be the means of faith in some, and of all this rage in others of the *Jews*, but the doctrines peculiar to Christ, or concerning him? Mr. Henry's note on this place is, *gospel-ministers shou'd preach Jesus, that must be their principal subject; their business is to bring people acquainted with him* *. And on another occasion, in his exhortation to Mr. Clark, about the method of preaching, he says, "Manage it as an ordinance of Christ,

ver. 4, 6.

* Vid. Henry in loc.

instituted for the advancing of his honour and interest, and therefore preach not yourself, but Christ Jesus the Lord, as one that hath determined to know nothing but Christ, and him crucified, and desires to acquaint others with him. Preach Christ, brother, said an aged minister to one that asked his advice; whatever you do, preach Christ †."

When the apostle had to do with the *Gentiles*, as well as *Jews*, it was in the preaching of *Rom. 16.*
Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mys- 25, 26.
tery, which was kept secret since the world began,
but now is made manifest, and by the scriptures of
the prophets, according to the commandment of the
everlasting God, made known to all nations for the
obedience of faith. Here again, if the preaching
of *Jesus Christ*, relates not to Christ's own
preaching, but to the apostles preaching him,
he seems to give an account of the general
tenor of his ministry among the *Gentiles*, as well
as *Jews*, desiring that they might be *establiſh'd* ver. 25.
according to his gospel, and the preaching of Jesus
Christ. Or, perhaps, he might have a parti-
cular reference to that way of preaching Christ,
which he had taken in this epistle; the grand
design of which was, to set out the doctrine
of justification by the free grace of God alone
thro' faith in Christ and his righteousness, to-
gether with the extent of the gospel-salvation
by Jesus Christ, as common to *Gentiles* and *Jews*;
and to improve it to practice toward the close.
This was preaching Christ directly in what I
call the *restrictive* way. And the passage itself
shows, whether he designedly referred to the
foregoing parts of the epistle or no, that the
preaching of Christ he here speaks of, is preach-
ing him *according to the revelation of the mystery*
concerning him, which principally consists in
these two articles, viz. That our Jesus is the
Messiah, or the Saviour of sinners; and that the

† *Exhortation to Mr. Samuel Clark, p. 77.*

Gentiles shou'd be called by the grace of God to partake of salvation thro' him, as these had been predicted by the prophets with some obscurity, but were then more plainly revealed under the gospel-state. And the end, for which the apostle thus preached Jesus Christ to all nations, Gentiles as well as Jews, according to the revelation of this mystery, was, for the obedience of faith; that is, either to bring them to the great act of obedience in believing on Christ, according to God's commandment, that we shou'd believe on the name of his Son Jesus Christ; or to bring them to obedience upon a principle of faith in Christ, as that purifies the heart, and works by love, and as we are sanctified by faith in him. This then was preaching Christ, as the great subject and end of that preaching; and it was preaching him, and salvation by him, to Gentiles as well as Jews, that he might be glorified by the obedience of faith.

1 John 3.
23.

Acts 15.

Gal: 5. 6.

Acts 26.

18.

1 Cor. 1.

23, 24.

Whether he preached to *Jews* or *Gentiles*, He preached Christ crucified, to the *Jews* a stumbling-block, and to the *Greeks* foolishness; but to them that are called, both *Jews* and *Greeks*, Christ, the power of God, and the wisdom of God. The subject of this preaching was Christ, as crucified, which takes in the nature, design and efficacy of his death, for the salvation of sinners by him. This way of salvation by one that was crucified, was despised by the learned among the *Gentiles*, as a senseless thing; and was stumbled at by the *Jews*, as contrary to all their notions in that day about the Messiah, and his salvation: They looked upon him as accursed himself, instead of being a Saviour to others. But the Apostles preached him; and they, that were effectually called, believed in him, under this very consideration of him, as the wisdom and power of God; in as much as the glory of divine wisdom, and the effi-

efficacy of divine power shone and operated thro' him, to the salvation of every one that believed. And in the close of that argument, the apostle goes on still further to preach him, as the grand medium of our obtaining all the blessings of salvation, viz. wisdom, righteousness, sanctification and redemption; and all this to his glory, and the glory of God in him, that, according as it is written, he that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord. ver. 30. ver. 31.

In another part of this epistle, the apostle, reflecting back upon his foregoing discourse, says, Now if Christ be preached that he rose from the dead, how say some among you, that there is no resurrection of the dead? What he here refers to in the foregoing discourse is, that he had delivered to them first of all, that which he also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures; and that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the Scriptures; and that this had been well attested by many proper witnesses. Now, says he in a review of all this, if Christ be preached as to these points, viz. his dying for our sins, his burial to prove his death, and his resurrection from the dead, which hath been so well attested, to prove his victory over death and the grave, and that God owned him for his Christ, and accepted him in his work, With what truth or reason can any say among you, that there is no resurrection of the dead? And then he goes on in the following verses, to the end of the Chapter, to preach a risen Jesus, as the ground of our discharge from sin, and of our faith and hope of a blessed resurrection to eternal life; and as the glorious quickning head, by whom we shall obtain it, and to whom we shall be conformed in it: Read the Chapter. And what is this, but preaching Christ directly and restrictively in my sense of the phrase? In 1 Cor. 15. 12. ver. 3-8.

In his second epistle to these Corinthians, he
 2 Cor. 1. 19. speaks of the Son of God, Jesus Christ, who was
 preached among them by him, and others. The
 subject of their preaching was the Son of God,
 a divine person, and Jesus Christ, the anointed
 Saviour; and to express their faithfulness, una-
 nimity and consistency in preaching him, the
 apostle says of it, that it was not *yea and nay*,
 sometimes one thing, and sometimes another,
 or with disagreeing principles about him, or
 with any uncertainty in what they preach'd;
 but it was *in him yea*, always the same, and
 a certain truth, like the promises themselves
 Ver. 20. which they preached, as establish'd in him; for
*all the promises of God in him are yea, and in him
 amen.* They are all certain, and confirmed in
 and by him, as the Mediator and Surety of the
 new covenant, to the glory of God, who hath
 given out these promises, by us, as his ministers;
 or who is glorify'd by our thus preaching Christ.
 This is still preaching him so, as to make him
 the great subject of their preaching.

He in another part of this epistle says, *We*
 2 Cor. 4. 5. *preach not our selves, but Christ Jesus the Lord;*
and our selves your servants for Jesus's sake. In
 the preceding verse the apostle had spoke of
 Christ, as the *image of God*; and the characters,
 under which he, and the other apostles were
 said in this verse to preach him, are those of
 his office, *Christ Jesus the Lord.* The end like-
 wise of their preaching him was, to advance
 his authority and glory, in opposition to their
 own. Christ, and not self, says one, was the
 matter and end of the apostle's preaching. They
 also preached themselves *servants* of the church
 for Jesus's sake, i. e. in obedience to him, and
 to set him out in all his glory among them,
 as the only Lord and Saviour. And in the
 next verse he gives the reason of their thus
 preaching Christ, and for his sake; and that was,
 the

the glorious discovery God had made of himself in Christ, which is every way worthy to be preach'd: *For God, who commanded the light* 2 Cor. 4. 6. *to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God, in the face of Jesus Christ;* which also shews that Christ's glory, and the glory of God in him, was the great subject of their preaching. And this belongs to my *restrictive* way of preaching him.

In the epistle to the *Colossians*, he speaks of Christ in them the hope of glory, whom, says he, Col. 1. 27, *we preach, warning every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom, that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus.* They preached Christ, as the ground of all our hope of glory, which is my *restrictive* way of preaching him: And they preached him *warning every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom;* they us'd all proper instructions, cautions and enforcements of the doctrine of Christ, to guard them against all sin, and to promote their spiritual understanding unto all manner of holy conversation and godliness, *that they might present every man among them perfect in Christ Jesus,* i.e. fully instructed in the knowledge of him, and of their duty to him in this world, and perfectly blessed in and thro' him in the next. And this may be reckon'd my *latitude*-way of preaching Christ, preaching duty with a proper reference to him.

Another place that speaks of preaching Christ, is this. *Without controversy, great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh,* 1 Tim. 3. 16. *justified in the spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory.* Here are six articles: Three of them describe Christ in his person and offices; and the other three, express the regards that were shewn to him. He is described in the first, second and

last; and is set out under that description in the other three, as the object of the angels vision, and of the *Gentiles* faith, and as the *subject* of the apostles preaching. The *subject* then of their preaching was (1.) *God manifested in the flesh*, which signifies his eternal Deity, and proper incarnation, with all the glory of the God that shone thro' the man Jesus. (2.)

- Rom. 4. 25. *Justified in the spirit*, as one that was delivered for our offences, and was rais'd again for our justification; or as one that had been put to death in the flesh, but was quicken'd by the spirit; and so was declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead. And (3.) *Received up into glory*, as an evidence of all this; and to embolden the humble confidence of those, who by him do believe in God that rais'd him up from the dead, and gave him glory, that their faith and hope might be in God. Christ, under all these considerations of him, was the *subject* of their preaching: And what is this but my *restrictive* way of preaching him?

The last places I can find, that speak in this sort of style, are the three or four following.

- 1 Tim. 2. 5, 6, 7. *There is one God, and one Mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus; who gave himself a ransom for all to be testified in due time. Whereunto* (or a testimony in due time to which, or to the testifying of which, τὸ μαρτύριον καὶ τοῦ ἐν δόξῃ) *I am ordained a preacher*: This text hath been consider'd in one of the sermons. Christ the Mediator and his ransom are here said to be the great *subject*, that the apostle was appointed to preach upon: Accordingly he speaks of him under like considerations, as the principal subject and argument of the gospel embassy, saying, *All things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath*
- 2 Cor. 5. 18—21.

bath given to us the ministry of reconciliation ; to wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them ; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation. Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as tho God did beseech you by us : we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God. For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin ; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.

And he tells these Corinthians, that he determined not to know (or to preach, as if he did not know) any thing among them, save Jesus Christ and him crucified. This he declared had been, and should be the grand subject of his ministry amongst them. Or, as good Mr. Flavel descants upon it, " It is as if he should say, it is my stated, settl'd judgment, not an hasty inconsiderate censure ; but the product and issue of my most serious and exquisite enquiries,——that all other knowledge, how profitable, how pleasant soever, is not worthy to be named the same day with the knowledge of Jesus Christ. This therefore I resolve to make the scope and end of my ministry ; and the end regulates the means.——Christ shall be the centre to which all the lines of my ministry shall be drawn.—As Christ above all other subjects, so Christ crucified above all things in Christ.*" And the learned Mr. Charnock comments upon it thus : " I determined, I judged it most convenient for me, most profitable for you. It was a resolution taken up deliberately. It was not for want of the knowledge of those principles which are cried up in the world for true wisdom. I understand them as well as others ; but what things I counted gain before, I now count loss, for the excellency of the knowledge

1 Cor. 2. 2.

* Vid. Flavel, vol. i. pag. 1.

of Christ; and think it not worth the while and pains to make much enquiry about them. He goes on, *to know nothing*, to believe nothing, to approve of nothing, to make known nothing. Not your traditions,—not your philosophical wisdom,—not your poets,—not your mysterious oracles,—*but Jesus Christ and him crucified*. Christ in the Deity and glory of his person, but also as crucified; in the ignominy of his passion, and the advantages of his office. This is the sum of the gospel, and contains all the riches of it. *Paul* was so much taken with Christ, that nothing sweeter than *Jesus* cou'd drop from his lips and pen. 'Tis observ'd, that he hath the word *Jesus* five hundred times in his epistles †.

I shall close this list with two passages more, where the phraseology is nearly a-kin to what we have been considering; and they are two, which you have added, the first is called
 Eph. 3. 8. *preaching the unsearchable riches of Christ, i. e.*
 pag. 45. *say you, the wonderful love of God to men in him, or the invaluable benefits of redemption by him.* Here you speak in what I call, your *restrictive* way of preaching Christ. But in another place, your explication of this passage looks more toward what I call your *latitude-way*, and runs
 pag. 59. *thus: There are more excellencies in christianity than we can now discern; instances of God's goodness we can never sufficiently adore.* So shy are you of speaking of the riches of Christ's own love; or of his riches, as personally residing in him; or as all the treasures or provisions of God's wisdom, love, and grace are repositied in him, to be dispensed by him, and enjoyed in and thro' him. These, I can't but think, come into the unsearchable riches of Christ, which the apostle preached among the Gentiles. And the

† *Vid. Charnock, Vol. 2. pag. 528, 529.*

context shews that the ends of his preaching them were, that the *Gentiles should be fellow-heirs and of the same body with the Jews*, by virtue of their union and communion with him, and *partakers of God's promise in Christ*, v. 6. *by the gospel*; and that the manifold wisdom of God might be known by the church, as now constituted of Gentiles as well as Jews, according to the eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord; in whom we have boldness and access with confidence by the faith of him. And what is this but preaching Christ according to my restrictive sense?

The other passage you have mentioned is, Rom. 10, where preaching Christ is called *preaching the word of faith*. Tho this is not expressly called *preaching Christ*; yet I allow, that by just construction from the context, it may be so called; because the apostle there says, *how shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher?* You have no comment upon this *preaching the word of faith*, otherwise than that you call it *preaching Christ*. I agree to call it so too. Let us then see what this *preaching the word of faith* was, which from the context may be call'd *preaching Christ*. If we look into the verses before it, we shall find it was preaching, that *Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth*; and that there needs no anxious inquiries about his coming down from above, or being brought up again from the dead, to bring about that happy design; he having already accomplished it, inasmuch as he has been incarnate, and hath died, and is risen again from the dead. And if we look into the words that follow the expression we are considering, it is explained to be preaching Christ, as the object of justifying and saving faith in his

y. 8--13. his state of resurrection from the dead ; for the connection is thus, *That is the word of faith which we preach, that if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation. For the scripture saith, whosoever believeth on him, shall not be ashamed. For there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek ; for the same Lord over all, is rich unto all that call upon him ; for whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord, shall be saved.* This is still preaching Christ directly, or in what I call the *restrictive* way, as a bare reading of these words themselves is sufficient to shew.

These, I think, are all the places in scripture, where this phrase, *preaching Christ*, is found ; I assure you I have not purposely overlooked any : And these, I hope, clearly decide the controversy between you and me. You will remember, Sir, it is the *scripture-notion* of preaching Christ, that you was to state and defend, as your title-page sets forth. And by all these accounts of that expression, it evidently appears to me, that the *scripture-notion* is entirely different from yours, in what I call your *latitude-way*, but you will have to be the *direct* and *immediate* way of preaching him. 'Tis not barely preaching the doctrines and precepts that Christ and his apostles preached, unless they are doctrines or precepts concerning him : or preaching from a text taken out of the bible ; or preaching by his authority ; or preaching the things that are common to his, and other religions. But it is preaching concerning Christ himself ; preaching the things that relate to his person, and office-characters, and the redemption of lost sinners by him ; and preaching upon other things with a *reference* to him.

'Tis

'Tis most generally to be understood of preaching him, as the principal *subject* of the discourse; which is what I make to be the *direct and restrictive* way of preaching him; and the instances are but *few*, where it is used in the laxer sense for preaching other things with a *reference* to him, which I make to be the *latitude-way* of preaching him. But no one instance can be found where it is used for what I have called *your latitude-way*, but what you call as *directly and immediately* preaching him, as any other way whatsoever.

I might rest the cause here; but, as you have farther added two scriptures more, I shall just take notice of them, that you may not complain of neglect; tho neither of them, in the contexts Acts 13. 5. where they stand, are called *preaching Christ*. pag. 45. You say preaching Christ is sometimes called *preaching the word*, and *preaching the gospel*. How 1 Cor. 9. 16. far preaching these may be *constructively* called *preaching Christ*, is another question: I believe they may be so called, according to my notion of things, as Christ is the reigning theme in them; and that for this reason they are sometimes used in scripture as synonymous terms. But I must take leave to deny that, in any of the places referred to, they are *expressly* called *preaching Christ*. And if we take the *constructive* way, you see by the scripture-sense of that phrase, what the construction must be. And the context of your first quotation explains it to be preaching the word of God, as the word of *salvation*, or as the *glad tidings of a saviour*, who was crucified, and laid in a sepulchre, but God raised him from the dead: And that it is preaching thro' him the forgiveness of sins, and that by him all that believe are justified from all things from which they could not be justified by the law of Moses. This is expressly said to be the word of God, and the word of the Lord, which
the

The Scripture-notion of

the apostles preached in that very chapter where your quotation lies. See *Act.* 13. 26—39. compared with ver. 4², 44, 46. And to the last of these verses, where the apostle speaks of *turning to the Gentiles*, he immediately adds, *for so hath the Lord commanded us, saying, I have set thee to be a light of the Gentiles, that thou shouldest be for salvation unto the ends of the earth. And when the Gentiles heard this, they were glad, and glorified the word of the Lord; and as many as were ordained to eternal life believed.* ver. 47, 48. What can be more directly preaching Christ than all this?

So likewise your other quotation, where you say preaching Christ is called *preaching the gospel*, must be understood of preaching the gospel of the grace of God, as the glad tidings of salvation by a redeemer, which is the scripture-sense of the word *gospel* strictly taken: and *glad tidings* is the precise meaning of the word *εὐαγγέλιον*. The context of this quotation, I think, says nothing one way or other to explain it; but uses it as a word, the sense of which was familiarly known in those days, and may be very well gathered from other places of scripture: So that there can be nothing in that form of speech against my notion of preaching concerning Christ, or with a reference to him; tho as it is not there called *preaching Christ*, I might have passed it by, as not coming up to the case in debate.

You have nothing more, as far as I observe, that can be pretended to support your *latitude*-notion of preaching Christ, or to militate against any part of mine that hath not been already considered: Here then we will dismiss this head, and proceed to your last principal point, which is

S E C T. V.

Fifthly, *My charges*, as you call them,
against my brethren.

THESE are raised to an extravagant height, and overloaded without mercy. Some of my expressions may possibly look a little too strong; and I confess they can hardly be thought otherwise, if considered in the false lights which you have thrown upon them, but in which, as I never designed them, so I never will own 'em. A little of that candor and justice, which every author needs and expects, especially in the pathetic and popular way of speaking, would have made all easy and inoffensive. And I am in no doubt but, generally speaking, it would have been so with regard to my expressions, as it hath been to those of many others, had not you sounded the alarm. However, I am very sorry that they have prov'd offensive to any of my brethren; and had I been apprehensive of it beforehand, shou'd certainly have express'd some things with a stricter guard: But as there was no design on my part to provoke your or any other man's displeasure; so I will venture to say, your uncharitable way of representing what you call my uncharitableness, and of torturing every sentence to support your charge, carries the face of a much worse temper of mind, than, I am sure, worked in my breast, when I delivered and published them.

I am free to own, that according to your notion of preaching Christ, it is certainly wrong to say there are but *few* that preach him: For, as you have stretch'd that notion, it seems almost impossible for any man to preach at all upon any text in the Bible, and not preach Christ; unless

he happens to preach upon some of the peculiarities of his Gospel, which you disrelish. But then, on the other hand, you will hardly scruple to own, that according to my notion of it, there are, comparatively speaking, but *few* that preach him; and you can't in justice suppose, but that I therein spoke according to my own sentiment of what the Scripture calls preaching him. So that the truth and charity of what you call my charge upon my brethren, must in all reason be determin'd by the superior evidence, that you, or I have given from Scripture to maintain our different notions about preaching Christ itself. And after what hath been now added to settle the meaning of that phrase, I shou'd think I might have left your charge to shift for itself, had you not carried it beyond all fair and reasonable bounds. For I apprehend that what I really designed by it will, generally speaking, stand or fall in the account of serious Christians, according as they shall judge that I have, or have not proved my notion to be the Scripture-notion of preaching Christ.

But was I to leave it here, you might possibly call it shrinking from under a load that I cou'd not remove; and others might think that all my expressions and designs were as black, as you have made them. I shall therefore give this part of your letter a fair impartial examination, as I hope I have all the rest, that there may be no room left for complaint. And here it may be proper to consider, (1.) The state of the charge, and then (2.) The nature of the proof that you have demanded on one hand, and that may reasonably be expected in such a case on the other.

1. *The state of the charge.*

I have already under some former heads taken
notice

notice of several instances of *misrepresentations*, that lie in this, as well as in other branches of your remarks. But what I have now in view is, to set things in a just light with relation to this charge, and to take off your misrepresentation of the whole in a more general way; and then to descend to a few particulars that have not been examined before, but were reserved for this place, as directly tending to set this charge to rights. In order to this, I beg leave to begin with a representation of the genuine, and, as far as I can remember, the *intended* sense of the whole of that head, and its enlargements, that you have made such fearful work with.

The head itself is this, *There are but few in our days that preach Christ, and but few that regard him.*

The plain meaning of the two parts of this sentence is, that there are but few ministers that preach Christ, in the manner I had been recommending, and was then pressing upon myself and others, compared with those that do not so preach him: And there are but few of the people that regard him, in the manner that I had recommended him to their regards, compared with those that do not so regard him. Or there are few of both respectively, in comparison with what one would wish, and might hope for, considering how much our blessed Lord deserves from us, and how high our obligations are to him. And even among them, that do sometimes preach him, and that do sometimes feel in themselves a great regard to him, there are too many, that at other times are guilty of very faulty neglects of him: Of these I with shame own myself to be one; and must acknowledge that, in a review of some of my own performances, I have reflected with regret, that so much had

not been said of Christ, as in that review I thought the subject might have led me to.

Few is a relative and comparative term; and they, that absolutely speaking, as we sometimes express it, or rather they, that in one comparison or relation may be *many*, in another may be but *few*. And here I speak exactly the language of Scripture, in which our blessed Lord says, after the
 Luk. 10. 2. seventy were added to the Apostles, *The harvest is great, but the labourers are few*: And yet they were *many* at that time, compared with what they lately had been, while the Apostles only were called to the ministry. Again, *Strait is the gate, and narrow is the way which leadeth to life, and few there be that find it*, i. e. compared with the *many*, that go in at the wide gate, and
 Mat. 7. 13, 14. broad way that leadeth to destruction. And *many*
 Mat. 22. 14. are called, but *few* are chosen: And yet in another consideration of them, they are said to be
 Rev. 7. 9. a great multitude, which no man can number.

As to my enlargement upon this head, you may please to observe, that it is thrown into three paragraphs, under every one of which I ranged my thoughts with different views. This is a common method with me, who have, perhaps, too much disrelish to what I may think unnecessary subdivisions: According to this method I sorted my ideas, as usual, in the discourse, and broke it into paragraphs, when I prepared it for the press, though I did not distinguish them by the numbers *one*, *two*, and *three*. The leading sentence in each of them shews this to have been my design. In the *first* of these paragraphs, I speak of *the greatest number of preachers and hearers, and of too many amongst us*. In the *second*, I speak of *the present modish turn of religion*. And in the *third*, of *the many sermons one may hear, that leave out Christ*: And after

Uncharitableness, groundless.

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after having mention'd the last of these, I carry my view backwards in reflections upon that, together with all I had been saying about ministers neglects of preaching Christ. This is the real state of the whole discourse under this head. And if you will give me leave to mark it out with figures, and to explain it, as I intended it, and as it ought to be explained, with a reference to the foregoing discourse, it stands thus, with its explications put in a different character *.

(1.) The greatest number of preachers and hearers seem; *there is an appearance from the too great and frequent absence of Christ in the sermons of the preachers, and from the too little serious, heart-affecting and influential regards to him that are seen in the lives of the hearers, compar'd with what has been urged about preaching and regarding him, as if they were contented to lay him aside; and too many there are among us of this Christian nation, such as Deists, Arians, Socinians, and gay young gentlemen, who think it wonderful polite to banter Christ's doctrines and miracles with daring insolent strains, that set themselves against him, either against his authority, or against some of his high and glorious characters, or against some important peculiarities of his religion. His name is, comparatively speaking, seldom heard of in common conversation, unless in a way of strife and debate; or which is infinitely worse, among some of these, in a way of contempt, reproach and blasphemy; and I am persuaded, or it is my opinion, that taking the whole state of the Christian interest together, it never enter'd less, as to the particular, express, high, and governing regards of ministers and people, which I am pleading for, than*

* See the sermons, 1st edit. p. 261, &c. 2d edit. 81, &c.

Mr. Chandler's Charge of

it doth at this day, into our practical godliness, into our solemn assemblies, into our dealings with God, into our dependencies on him, expectations from him, and devotedness unto him.

(2.) The present modish turn of religion, *which is too much in esteem and reputation among some ministers and others, who make high pretences to reason and politeness in the present age, looks, from the way of their talking about it, as if we, of this nation, i. e. the modish gentlemen amongst us, began to think that we have no need of a mediator, but that all our concerns were to be managed with God, as an absolute God. The religion of nature makes up the darling topicks of our age, as far as this modish turn prevails, and the religion of Jesus is valued only for the sake of that, and only so far as it carries on the light of nature, and is a bare improvement of that kind of light. All that is restrictively Christian or that is peculiar to Christ; every thing concerning him, that hath not its apparent foundation in natural light, or that goes beyond its principles, is waved, and banished, and despised, by such, as go into the present modish turn. And even moral duties themselves, which are essential to the very being of Christianity, are usually harangued upon, in the rational or rhetorical way by gentlemen of this stamp, without any evangelical turn, or reference to Christ, as fruits of righteousness to the praise and glory of God by him. They, by the same gentlemen's way of talking about them, are placed in the room of Christ, are set up independent of him, and are urged upon principles and with views, as far as appears by their discourse, ineffectual to secure their practice, and more suited to the sentiments and temper of an heathen, than of those that take the whole of their religion from Christ.*

(3.) How

(3.) How many sermons may one hear, in one place or another, and at one time or other, through this kingdom, that leave out Christ; both name and thing; and that pay no more regard to him, than if we had nothing to do with him? What a melancholy symptom, what a threatening omen is this state of the case that we have been bearing of, taking in what hath been said of the greatest number and too many on one hand, and the modish turn of religion on the other, and the many particular sermons that one may hear. Do we not? Is there not reason to fear that we do already feel its dismal effects, as to the influence that this, amongst other things, may have had in what is so generally complained of among serious Christians? viz. in the growth of infidelity, in the rare instances of conversion-work, and in the cold, low and withering state of religion among the professors of it, beyond what hath been known in some former days, when there was more of Christ brought into our religion, and more of the life and power of godliness. May not these things? I propose it as matter of humble enquiry, whether they may not be chargeable, in great measure, as one cause contributing towards them, on a prevailing disuse of preaching Christ, compared with what has been known in some former days, and with what ought to be amongst us? And where will they end, if the disuse goes on, with increase, and little or nothing concerning him is, at length, to be heard amongst us? How should all the ministers of Christ, that have not hitherto preached him so much, as hath been urged upon myself and others? how shou'd they all that heartily love him, that are concerned for his honour, and for the honour of religion, as Christian, be affected at these thoughts? as I desire to be. And how

how shou'd they be excited by the too general neglect of others, *that have not the same thoughts, and the same concern about these things*, to be so much the more frequent, earnest, and explicate in preaching Christ themselves;

This I think is the natural sense of all these expressions; it agrees with my settled fears about these things; and as far as I can recollect, was the sense of my mind when I delivered them; and it is only in this sense that I now own them. But you, Sir, have taken no notice of the order and relations, in which my ideas were ranged, and have given a false scent to the reader, that he, with you, might hunt down what was never started, till your own imagination formed it. Give me leave just to observe *three* of your misrepresentations, that affect the greatest part, if not the whole of the matter of this charge: A bare reading of your remarks will easily satisfy the reader of the two first, and some particular instances shall be pointed out, to give evidence of the last. Therefore

[1.] You represent the *generality* of ministers and hearers, through the greatest part of your remarks on this head, as promiscuously, and alike included, in what was intended only for some of them. And yet, when you thought it might answer some end, you cou'd go into a distribution of the parts of one sentence, as foreign from my apparent design, as invention cou'd well make it. You will therefore me to mean, *that every thing peculiar to Christ is waved from the pulpit, banished from conversation, and despised by the generality of preachers and hearers: Whereas that related only to the gentlemen, that go into the modish turn of the present age, without the distinctions you have flung it into. And this sufficiently answers another of your flings*

at what I had said about the unfashionableness ^{pag. 2.} of preaching Christ.

[2.] You represent my design in the whole to be, to *charge and reproach my brethren, and* ^{pag. 71,} *to treat them in a contemptuous way,* with abun- ^{72, 75, 86;} dant more to the same purpose. Whereas my only real and professed design was, from a serious concern for the honour of Christ and his religion, to *stir up myself and others to keep this point,* preaching Christ, *in view,* as I said in the introduction to the arguments or motives *. Nor did I intend to mark out any particular persons, or parties of men (as I have before declared;) nor am I conscious of having said any thing that cou'd do it, any further than the nature of things will fix it on the guilty, and on them *only,* wherever they are found.

All the design I had, or cou'd, in charity, be supposed to have toward them, that shou'd find themselves more or less guilty, was only to attempt their conviction and reformation, if God shou'd own it, that they might preach Christ more and better. And therefore if you had been as well disposed toward me, as you have expressed yourself toward the *Deists,* I believe I shou'd have found better quarter than I have. For speaking of one, that espouseth their cause, you say, *I think an immoral vicious clergyman of every sort is a scandal to his profession, and had it been their reformation only that our author had in view, I shou'd have commended his design, and heartily fallen in with it. But to introduce the vices of the clergy into an argument against the truth of Christianity, is to attack it, &c.* † You can't pretend, Sir, that the nature of my argument, or my view in it was *against* and not *for* the preach-

* See the sermons, 1st edit. p. 252. 2d edit. p. 71.

† Reflections on the conduct of the modern Deists, p. 33.

ing of Christ, or that I had not in view *the reformation* of others with relation to it. Why then should you not have *commended my design, and fallen in with it*, rather than fall so fiercely upon me for it, if indeed you love that Christ should be preached, and that the clergy of every sort should herein likewise be reformed?

[3.] You represent my expressions through the whole, in strains, aggravated and forced beyond their natural construction, or real design; and me, as saying what I never said. Some instances of this, besides the many before observed, and more that might be still further pointed out, are as follow.

pag. 61. In answer to my saying, that the greatest number of preachers and hearers *seem* contented to lay Christ aside, you say, *I could not fasten a worse reproach upon any*. And to make out this your heavy charge upon me, you strain my words in an exposition, as if I had said, that *they seem contented to part with their Christianity, and their hope of salvation by the Gospel*; that *the greatest number of preachers are contented to lay Christ aside*; and that *all those who are not of mine, of Mr. Coward's lecturers, and of my dear friend's church, lay aside Christ contentedly, because they don't preach Christ according to the standard of our orthodoxy*. How injurious and forc'd an interpretation is this? You are not so just, as to take any notice of my *softening* way of expression, in which I only say, it *seems* to be so; the plain meaning of which in the common use of language is, that there is something which looks as if it were so, though it *really* may not be so. As, for instance, when one says many persons neglect the salvation of the Gospel at such a rate, that they *seem contented* to go to hell; who wou'd think that the meaning is, they *really are contented* to go thither? Or that

that it means any thing more than, that there is something in their way of conduct, which looks as if they were so? Nor are you so kind, as to consider my words with relation to the foregoing discourse, as they certainly were intended, about the *high* and *governing* regards to Christ I had been pleading for. But there is surely a difference between *seeming* contented to lay aside Christ in that *comparative* sense, and being *really* contented to do it *absolutely* and in *all respects* whatsoever.

When I say the present modish turn of religion looks, as if we began to think we have no need of a Mediator, &c. You explain it thus, *i. e.* as though ministers and people were going to turn down-right infidels and apostates from the Christian faith. And you don't find that the generality of ministers and people are verging to infidelity, &c. But may there not be something in some persons of that turn, which looks, as if they began to think as I have said, without the generality of ministers and people certainly verging to it, and going to turn downright infidels and apostates? You, including ministers and people, say in the next words, *how many there are who have already gone into this fashionable religion, you cannot tell; but hope I can, and will;* as if you knew none; and thereupon add, that you are not apprehensive that Christianity is in such danger: And yet, in your usual way of consistency with yourself, you say, a few pages before, *one turn of the present age is a turn to infidelity,* pag. 52. and speak a little afterwards of the *open opposition that is made to Christianity.* Are there then no infidels and apostates from the Christian faith? No vergings to infidelity? With like consistency of design, at another time you turn the tables, and represent as if I thought *insisting on the reli-*

pag. 68,
69.

gion of nature an unpardonable crime in order to the defence of the Christian religion; and that ministers do not seasonably and suitably employ themselves, by giving their people the clearest view they can of the whole evidence and proof of the Gospel, beginning with the principles of natural religion. But there is no shadow of reason for suggestions of this nature; for the question was not about maintaining the revelation; but about the manner of using and improving it with a reference to Christ. And I can't but think the revelation itself would be less worth contending for, if Christ were to be left out of it.

pag. 70.

I had spoke of some, that value the religion of Jesus only so far as it carries on the light of nature, and is an improvement of that kind of light; instead of that *kind of light*, you quote it *that light*: And afterwards, in opposition to my words in your way of quoting them, say,

pag. 71.

—Every doctrine peculiar to Christ, and his mediatory undertakings, is an improvement of natural light. What! an improvement of that kind of light; of light founded in, and springing up from its own principles as natural light? I think you dared not say this. But that you might seem to say something in a loose and general way, you put it *that light*; and by an improvement of that light mean, if I understand what you aim at, not barely raising the principles of the light of nature to higher evidence, but adding to them supernatural principles also by another kind of light. However you afterwards allow, that the things peculiar to Christ have not any foundation in natural light, i. e. say you, they are properly matters of divine revelation, which the natural reason of mankind could never have discovered. But to favour your way of expressing them, as improvements of *that light*, you add, that
since

pag. 72.

since their being revealed they commend themselves to the consciences of men, and are undoubtedly agreeable to the truest reason whatsoever. I believe with you they are agreeable to the truest reason whatsoever; but yet I think all of them don't obtain approbation in the consciences of unregenerate men; nor are they all agreeable to *their* reason, as it is blinded with the numerous prejudices that arise from the dominion of sin over them, and other circumstances that attend it. And may there not be also some things in the particulars of this revelation, that lie so far beyond our distinct perception in this imperfect state, as that our bare reason cannot see the reasonableness of them upon any other foundation than this, *viz.* that God has spoken them in his word? But when you have made the most you can of their being improvements of natural light, this is still different from their being an improvement of that *kind* of light.

These two sorts of light, and their different influence are well distinguished by Mr. *Howe*, who says, "Unto that part of religion which is natural, there was so much of an advantage beforehand, as that there was an old foundation to build upon. There are some notions of God left, not only concerning his *existence*, but his nature and attributes many of them.— So that here was somewhat *in nature* to be wrought upon, as to this part of religion. But as to that part which respects the Mediator, this was a frame wholly to be raised up from the ground. There were no principles *immediately and directly* inclining to take part with the Gospel; but all to be implanted anew. The way that God wou'd take to bring back souls to him, being so infinitely above all human thought. —Besides—the tendency

dency and aspect of it (when it should come to be made known) are such, as that it could not but find the temper of mens spirits most strongly opposite, not merely ignorant, but prejudiced and highly disaffected. For this course most directly tended to take men quite off from their old bottom; to stoop and humble, and even bring them to nothing; to stain the pride of their glory, and lay them down in the dust as, abject wretches, in themselves fit for nothing, but to be trampled on and crushed by the foot of divine revenge." With much more to the same purpose*.

pag. 69. Another fallacy like the last mentioned appears in representing as if I had said *natural religion is a darling topick above the religion of Jesus himself*, even as his religion includes all the improvements of natural light; for so you seem to explain it in the following paragraph, where, in opposition to my words in your way of referring to them, you expatiate in admirations of the religion of Jesus, as it *carries on the light of nature, and is an improvement of that light*. But, to put a construction upon my words, as if I *excluded* all the improvements of natural light from the religion of Jesus, when I spoke of the religion of nature as a darling topick above the religion of Jesus, is as absurd, as it is evidently contrary to my own explication of the sentence you there reflect upon, which speaks of the *religion of Jesus being valued only for the sake of the religion of nature, and only so far as it carries on the light of nature, &c.* † And I had before too plainly expressed my high value of *its noble im-*

* Vid. Howe's works, Vol. 1. p. 328.

† See the sermons, 1st edit. p. 262. 2d edit. p. 81.

provements of natural light and principles *, fo any to suspect the contrary ; though I dare not confine my value of it to its bare improvement of that kind of light ; much less to its barely confirming natural religion, as you afterwards injuriously change the terms. pag. 71.

When I speak of setting up moral duties independent of Christ, you apply it to the generality of ministers, according to your usual way ; and then say, *You are persuaded it will be denied by every Protestant divine in Great Britain.* And you have heard many in the establishment, and amongst the Dissenters, preach on these things ; but never heard one that asserted that they were sufficient to salvation irrespectively to Christ, &c. I never said they did assert the one, or did not deny the other. But there is surely a difference between asserting one thing, and not denying another directly and professedly ; and preaching in such a manner, as says nothing about them ; or as leaves the hearers at a loss to know what the speaker would assert or deny ; or as tends to lead them into an apprehension, as if the one might be asserted, and the other not denied. pag. 72.

Again, you represent me, as if I pretended to search the heart, and judge of mens secret views and purposes ; and afterwards roundly assert, that I ransack their very hearts and souls, and make their views as criminal, as I do their principles ineffectual : And add in the next Words, *Here it is beyond your power to make any reflections.* You leave this part of the charge to God and my own conscience. He will judge between me and them. Whereas I evidently spoke only of views and principles, as far as they appeared in their discourse Principles, you allow in the following words, come under our notice. I suppose you must mean, as far as they are discovered. And pray, Sir,

* See the sermons, 1st edit. p. 228. 2d edit. p. 48.

why

why may not *views* come under our notice, as far as they are discovered likewise? Can't I say one view of Mr. Chandler's remarks was to fix a charge of uncharitableness upon me, without going *so deep as to ransack his very heart and soul*? Is this a thing so criminal to say, that it goes beyond your power to make any reflections? And is this, as you go on, such a dreadful charge as *must be left to God and my own conscience*, as if it were the most hideous crime that ever was committed? Surely, Sir, your passions transported you too far.

Once more, you represent as if I made the design of preaching Christ, the *only cause* of the growth of infidelity, and of the rare instances of conversion, &c. Whereas, I only ask, whether they may not *in great measure* be chargeable upon it? But you seem to think Christ is so much preached, that these things are in no *degree* owing to any disuse of preaching him, but altogether to other causes; some of which I believe, with you, may have too much contributed to it, *p. 86, 87, 88*. You likewise *believe and hope that not one sermon can be heard that leaves out Christ both name and thing*; and *you have never heard any sermons in the established Church, or amongst the Dissenters, that had not their proper reference to Christ, when they were concerning good works*. This may be very true, according to your notion of preaching Christ. But I could turn you to *one sermon*, or more if there were occasion, that don't name Christ under any of his titles, characters, or any description of him whatsoever, that I can find; nor say any thing that would lead a stranger to apprehend that there ever was such a person as Jesus Christ in the world. And yet in that, which I have now most particularly in my eye, the minister

pag. 85.

pag. 37.

talks pretty much about repentance, and a holy life, preparations for death, and securing the favour of God, and the like: But you must excuse me from naming any authors of this sort; I will only say, to prevent a misconstruction, I don't mean you.

It would be too irksome a labour to go thro' every branch of your unkind and forced constructions of my words, and unfair intimations, as if I had said or meant what I never thought of. I shall only add a bare recital of your words, where you sum up your charge against me at last; and let any impartial man judge, whether friendship, charity, or justice could have put such a severe and peremptory interpretation upon my discourse, viz. that *I have publickly charged the greatest number of my brethren with laying Christ aside, and being mere heathens in the manner of their public ministrations; as being traitors to Jesus Christ, and scandalously deserting his cause from a prevailing love to natural religion.* This general view, together with these particular specimens, that I have given of your way of managing this part of your design, shall suffice. And if upon the whole, we lay aside all your vehement outcries, and multiplied misrepresentations, and reduce my words in all their parts to their natural and designed sense, What will the main of your charge upon me come to then? *Parturiunt montes, &c.*

As soon as you had got through this indecent work, I fancy, you began to fear the world would think you had over-acted your part; and therefore something must be subjoined in the nature of an apology. And this is so very consistent with all the rest, as to undo the greatest part of what you had been doing. It seems I am *chosen* to be the subject of all this severity, not

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- pag. 92. *because I join with other serious divines in their grievous complaints of the growth of infidelity and vice in their writings; but, as you apprehend it, because of that unchristian spirit with which I make them.* And yet I believe, by and by it will be found, that the very same spirit appears in them and me. Dr. Watts's preface and spirit are particularly recommended to me, as a *pattern worthy my imitation.* I dare say, I esteem that preface and the spirit of it as much as Mr. Chandler. I really think them worthy to be imitated, and have so far copied after them, as that what I wrote *was with an apparent,* and I can truly add with a real hearty concern for the honour and success of Christianity. And whether the Doctor in his excellent preface and elsewhere, hath not gone as far, or farther than I have, in several of the expressions I am so severely chastised for, the world will be able to judge when I have produced his words in their proper place.
- ibid.*
- The complaints of good men before us you will not affirm were not reasonable. But if I make any, it will be no justification of my conduct. If their
- pag. 93. *accounts were true it don't follow that mine are so too,* though mine are the very same with theirs. They it seems may be indulged in complaining without any proof, but I ought to have produced my proofs of every tittle when demanded from me.
- pag. 92, 93. *i. e. I ought to have done it when that was demanded, which never had been demanded: However, you are so good as to agree that others shall escape censure without proving their complaints, and to demand under severe penalties now, that I defend myself by proving mine.* How very kind and consistent is all this! And how becoming one that *bath ever had a real value for me!* Well, let us go on to consider
- ibid.*

2. *The nature of the proof that you have demanded on one hand, and that may reasonably be expected in such a case on the other, i. e. to support what I have said, and shewn to be my sense, about the few that preach Christ, and the few that regard him.*

And here you deal with me just in the same way as Mr. *Woolston* does, ludicrously enough, with the Bishop of *St. David's*, whose words are these, "*The Bishop* says, that we infidels (for I am one it seems) *labour industriously to root out all sense of virtue and religion amongst us.* This is sad indeed, if true; and very bad men should we be, and deserving of the worst punishment. But this wants proof. How does he know that we are for rooting out all sense of virtue and religion amongst men? Doth it appear so, by our writings or our practices? Doth he find in our books any exhortations to looseness and immorality? Nothing of this I am sure. Is he then so well acquainted with infidels, as to know them to be of more depraved and debauched lives than profess'd Christians?" &c. * After the same manner you say to me, *Have you conversed with the greatest part of the hearers, or have they waited on you, to tell you their minds, and declare their satisfaction and content to lay Christ aside? I can't persuade myself to think, that you have heard the greatest number of preachers, and can prove either from their publick performances, or private conversations, that they are so content as you imagine to lay aside Christ: If you can't, you have done very ill thus to represent them to their hearers, and deserve a severer reproof than that of the Lord rebuke thee.* Here it must be own'd you go beyond Mr.

* *Defence*, p. 36.

pag. 62. *Woolston.* But you proceed in his strain, or rather worse still, *Justice to Christ's ministers and people, and justice to yourself demand it from you, to vindicate so deep a charge by naming the persons you point at; and yet add, in your consistent way, How could so random a charge escape from a good man and a Christian minister? It seems then a random charge, i. e. a charge pointed at no particular persons, must be proved by naming the persons pointed at; very well. You go on in the Woolstonian manner still, I am heartily sorry you fall so often into such very bad company, &c.*

ibid. And again, *One would be apt to think by such a representation that you had your spies in all companies, and secret intelligence of every thing that passes in conversation, or the spirit of prophecy to inform you; or else I am sure the charge neither becomes you as a man or a Christian. Is not this Mr. Woolston all over, or abundantly worse, as to the nature of the proof you demand, as to the ludicrous way of managing it, and as to the rigour with which the demand is made?*

You can't suppose, Sir, that it would be any way decent or proper for me to go into an accusation and proof, as to particular persons not preaching Christ, could I name ever so many of them. I am apt to believe that you, and the greatest part of mankind would count it a most invidious attempt; and was I to give into it upon your demand, would charge me with such uncharitableness and imprudence in my conduct, as I hope I never shall be guilty of; and as my own reason and conscience would condemn me for, with more displeasure than all the world could throw upon me. This is a sort of proof, that prudent sober men have not used to demand in cases of this nature.

I can't think you would look upon yourself as fairly

fairly dealt with in regard to any thing you may have asserted of a publick nature, if the same demands of proof were made upon you, as you have made upon me. You, on another occasion affirm, that *the GENERALITY choose the easier part, and are for commuting with Almighty God, being content with knowing, or imagining that they do know their Master's will, without ever being at the pains to do it.* And elsewhere having spoke of publick authority as being for the reformed Calvinistick Christianity, say, *But why then do the clergy of the church of England so GENERALLY contradict this publick authority in their sermons and writings, and preach up the Arminian doctrines that are condemned by publick authority?* * *A censorious persecuting bigot is now GENERALLY looked on with contempt, and treated as a common enemy to mankind* †. *There are but FEW, and those contemptible enough, that place all religion in mystery and darkness* ‡. You likewise, speaking of the author of the *Grounds*, &c. call him a *FASHIONABLE gentleman*; and speak of him as got into the way of the *FASHIONABLE* divines, in not speaking what he thinks, but concealing his thoughts about the particulars of Christianity, and professing a religion he don't believe *.

Now though, for ought I know, these things may be true, and some of them are such as one would wish to be so; yet there are persons in the world, who will think some of them false, and others of them injurious, and will call them as uncharitable a charge, especially upon some parties of men, as any thing that I have said. Suppose then they should demand that you prove all these particulars, as to the *generality* on one side, as to the *few* on another, and as to the *fashionable gentlemen* on the third; and should insist upon it

§ *Knowledge and Practice*, &c. p. 17.

* *Reflections on the Conduct of modern Deists*, Preface, p. 19. † *Ibid.* p. 12. ‡ *Ib.* p. 13. * *Ib.* p. 41, 100.

that you *name* enow to make up the *generality* of one sort, and to reduce the number to a *few* of the other, in the former cases; and men of figure enow to constitute a *fashion* in the latter. Or should they ask you, whether you *have conversed with the greatest part of all* these sorts of people, or whether *they have waited upon you to tell you their minds*? Whether you can prove either *from the publick performances, or private conversation* of all the respective parties themselves, that they assert or own every thing you say of them severally? Or whether you have *had your spies in all companies, and secret intelligence of every thing that passes in conversation, or have the spirit of prophecy to inform you*? And should they speak hard things of you, if by these means you did not give the proofs they require; Would you not think their demands to be very unfair and unreasonable? Would you not say they deal unkindly by you in making them under such penalties, and putting you upon a method of proof that no unprejudiced man living would expect from you? Why then must such injunctions, with such severity, be laid upon me?

I suppose you think it is the present sense of serious ministers and Christians of all denominations, that there is a general decay of practical religion in this age; and Dr. *Wright* says, "It is *most true* in our degenerate age, that real goodness and piety is *every where* spoken against. Let a man be in communion with the established church, or with any of those who dissent from it; yet if he would maintain a prevailing sense of religion, and if he lives an outwardly regular and sober life, he is *sure to be hated and reviled for it.*" † Is not this, according to your way of talking, a very uncha-

† *Sermons on Act. xxviii. 22. pag. 33.*

ritable and extensive censure upon our degenerate age? But what method would the Doctor, or others of the same serious sentiments take, to prove these things? or to prove what we call, without any scruple, a *general* corruption of manners in the present day? The very same I could take to prove what you call a charge upon my brethren. Would you not think it unreasonable to insist upon a mathematical demonstration of such a point, as any of these? Or would it not suffice that such evidence is or can be offered, as the nature of such general things admits of? This I think may be given in the case, for the proof of which you call upon me.

Suppose *you*, Sir, were put to the proof of any of the fore-mentioned charges of a publick nature: Would you say, that the thing you should prove appears to be true, by what you have yourself observed from the private manners of some, and the publick writings of others? The same say I, in the present case, as far as I have been capable of observing for twenty years and upwards. And were the practical sermons, published an age or two ago, to be compared with the products of this, we might leave it to every one to judge, whether the *general* run of the former had not much more of Christ, than that of the latter? Though, blessed be God, many, absolutely speaking, have performed very worthily in the publick regards they have shewn to Christ in our age; yet, I doubt, these must be called few, if compared with the bulk of printed sermons, in which Christ has not been kept so much in sight, as he formerly used to be. Again, would you say, it has been the general complaint of the most serious and judicious Christians you have conversed with all your days; and a complaint founded upon

upon their own observation in the course of their lives? The same say I, in the present case; and could produce a great many instances of this sort, and tell abundance of facts, which they have attested, with all appearance of credibility, from their own experience, as proofs of the truth of their observation. And this is a sort of evidence, which is usually admitted, as far as it goes, and is credible. The Apostle himself went upon it in some charges upon the *Corinthians*, when he said, *It is commonly reported that there is fornication among you; and such fornication as is not so much as named amongst the Gentiles: And when ye come together in the church I hear there be divisions amongst you, and I partly believe it.*

1 Cor. 5.

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Chap. 11.

18.

Would you further say, it has been often spoken of, as matter of great grief and concern, in the writings of the most observing, learned, and pious divines, and of some among them, who were as remarkable for their charity, as for the Christian faith, and other parts of the Christian temper? The same say I, in the case before us. And as this is the most unexceptionable or inoffensive way of giving a moral proof, which is all that the nature of the thing admits of; and as it will at the same time shew that my charity is no more to be taxed than theirs, it may be proper to collect some specimens of this sort. I shall therefore subjoin a few of the many testimonies to this purpose, that might be produced from excellent and learned divines, with whom I am not worthy to be named; from divines, chiefly of the first rank, both in the Church of *England* and among the Dissenters; and most of them divines as agreeable to Mr. Chandler for their charity, as can reasonably be expected. These say (the same things, or things as uncharitable and censorious on the age, or more so, than any thing contain'd

contain'd in my words, if they are taken in their true and genuine sense, as I have explain'd them : And these express themselves in as strong, and some of them in much stronger terms, than I have done. The greatest number of quotations from these will relate to the regards that are shown to Christ, and the peculiarities of his religion, inclusive of his Spirit; and a few of them, to the regards that are shown to Christian religion in general; and these last are not foreign to my design, since they have a reference to Christ; and a charge of neglects is equally *uncharitable* in them all.

I shall begin with learned divines of top character in the *establishment*, and mention some things I meet with in only three or four of them.

Bishop *Burnet*, towards the close of his life in the *seventieth* year of his age, has these words, " Our *ember* weeks are the burden and grief of my life. The much greater part of those, who come to be ordained, are ignorant to a degree, not to be apprehended by those, who are not obliged to know it. The easiest part of knowledge is that to which they are the greatest strangers. I mean the plainest part of the Scriptures, which they say, in excuse of their ignorance, that their tutors in the universities never mentioned the reading of to them. So that they can give no account, or at least a very imperfect one, of the contents even of the Gospels. Those who have read some few books, yet never seem to have read the Scriptures," &c. I don't chuse to add the rest of that paragraph, having no pleasure in exposing the clergy. But he afterwards adds, " This does often tear my heart. The case is not much better in many, who having got into orders come for institution, &c. In what a case are

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we to deal with any adversary, Atheist, Papist, or Dissenter, and carry on the great concerns of the Gospel, when so great an ignorance in the fundamentals of religion hath spread itself so much among those, who ought to teach others, and yet need that one teach them the first principles of the oracles of God?" * Now who can suppose that Christ is much preached by persons of these characters, who, the bishop says, made up the *much greater* part of those that came to be ordained?

In another of his writings having spoke of the *many books of piety and devotion that have been written, in which Christian religion is proposed in its own true and natural colours*, he afterwards adds, "But after all this, into what a torrent of grief and lamentation must we break out, when we consider the age we live in! For *few* do either believe or reflect on those great things: And as if there were a *general conspiracy* against God and religion, how does the *greater* part among us break loose from all ties and bonds of that yoke that is light and easy, and enslave themselves to many base and hurtful lusts and passions? And are not satisfied with being as bad as they can be, but desire that all the world may esteem them such, and glory in their shame; and inance their guilt by turning *factors* for hell, studying to corrupt all about them. This sad prospect must needs deeply affect all that either truly love God, or have a tender compassion for the souls of men, &c." †

The present bishop of *London*, in his directions to the clergy of his diocese, speaking of his

* *Pastoral Care*, 3d edit. *Preface*, p. 3; &c.

† *Preface to the Life of God in the Soul of Man*, p. 3.

aim to give a check to some particular irregularities which young men are apt to fall into, and which in his opinion tend to defeat the main ends of public preaching, especially in mixed and popular congregations, goes on with his discourse in the following words, "To prevent this, it must be always remembered in the first place that we are *Christian preachers*, not barely preachers of morality.—The several branches of what we may call the *mediatorial scheme*, with the several duties annexed to and resulting from each branch, are without doubt the main ingredients of the Gospel-state; those by which Christianity stands distinguished from all other religions, and Christians are raised to far higher hopes, and far greater degrees of purity and perfection. In which views it would seem strange if a Christian preacher were to dwell only upon such duties as are common to *Jews*, *Heathens*, and *Christians*, and were not more especially obliged to dwell on and inculcate those principles and doctrines which are the distinguishing excellence of the Christian religion.—But yet so it is, that these subjects are too much forgotten amongst young preachers, who being better acquainted with morality than divinity fall naturally into the choice of moral, rather than divine subjects, and will of course do so till the two subjects are equally considered and understood." And speaking of some former times, "when, the pulpits being much taken up with some select points of divinity, discourses upon moral heads were less common." He adds, "And after those times were over, their successors upon the restoration, desirous to correct that error, and to be upon the whole as little like their predecessors as might be, seem to have fallen into the contrary extreme; so that probably in many places the heads of divi-

nity began to be as *rarely* treated of, as the heads of morality had been before.

The thing therefore which I would recommend to young preachers is, to avoid both the extremes, by ordering the choice of their subjects in such a manner that each of those heads may have its proper share, and their hearers be duly instructed upon both. Only, with these cautions in relation to moral subjects, that upon all such occasions justice be done at the same time to *Christianity*, by taking special notice of the improvement which it has made in each branch of the moral scheme, and warning their hearers not to rest in the righteousness of a moral heathen, but to aspire to Christian perfection "†. With much more to the same purpose.

Dr. *Nicholls*, speaking of the opinions of Atheists and Theists, says, " There is the greatest danger from these infidel doctrines ; because they are espoused by men of *all* parties, and by *many* of those who join themselves with some particular body of *Christians* ; for it is easy to observe, a *great many* men railing bitterly against Papists or Fanatics, when they believe no more of Jesus Christ, than they do of transubstantiation ; and have no more liking to the Gospel, than to a long canting sermon. Now because such infidels lie herded among divers sects of Christians, as they are not so easily discerned, so they are not so vigorously opposed ; and by this means they have of late gained such strength, that now they begin to look formidable. It is dreadful to think what *numbers* of men are poisoned by infidel principles ; for *Atheism* and *Theism* are now got from the court to the *Exchange*, they begin to talk them in shops and

† *Directions to the Clergy, &c.* p. 13—15.

stalls; and the cavils of *Spinoza* and *Hobbs*, are grown common even to the very rabble. But the greatest encouragement which infidelity meets with, is from some philosophical gentlemen, who find that the Scripture seems to contradict some notions in philosophy, which they have espoused, or some experiments which they are persuaded of the truth of; and therefore for that reason, they will disbelieve that and all revealed religion." *

The last author I shall mention of the Church of *England* is Mr. *Ditton*, who speaking of the present state of the Christian world, says, "What is talk'd of more, and believed less, than the doctrine (of the resurrection?) We call Jesus Christ Lord and Saviour, we repeat the articles of the *Creed*, and bow at his name, with an hundred more such like instances of outside reverence and devotion; when at the same time there are *multitudes amongst us* that are so far from either adoring his person, or believing his Gospel, that it is a question whether the worst enemies he has in the world, can outdo us in heinous contempt of both. The profession of Christianity, is for the *most part* nothing but mere pageantry; and people take it upon them out of a compliment to their country, and to be civil to the government under which they live.

To call all *reveal'd religion* into question, is now-a-days almost as necessary a step towards the compleating of a gentleman, as nice breeding and behaviour, or a good dress. And he that can't (at least) doubt and demur whether the *Prophets* and *Apostles* were not mere deluded enthusiasts, or wicked designing impostors, makes as ill a

* *Conference with a Theist*, Part 1, Preface, pag. 2, 3.

figure in a genteel *modish* company, as he who wears a habit, that has been out of use for two or three centuries. A wretch that can scarce hammer out the sense of an author of the lowest class (perhaps even in his own native tongue) sets up now-a-days for a *critick* upon the Gospel; and every *little Tyro*, that is just advancing to his first degree in *mathematicks*, thinks he is able to *demonstrate* all to be a cheat." *

Let us now proceed to other instances among *Dissenters*, and begin with the great and learned Dr. Owen. To transcribe all the passages in his works suited to my purpose, would be almost to write a volume. I shall only single out a few delivered at different times, and found in different books. In one, he says, "When there is a general contagious disease, the plague, or the like, every man will look to his health and safety with reference to other occasions, but will be most careful in regard to the general contagion. Now if forsaking this spring of life be the plague of the age, and the plague of the place where we live, and the plague of Christians, we ought to be very careful, lest this *general contagion* should reach us more or less, one way or other. It is evident to me, who have some advantage to consider things, as much as ordinary men, that the apostacy, the cursed apostacy that spreads itself over this nation, and whose fruits are in all ungodliness and uncleanness, consists in an apostacy from, and forsaking the *person of Christ*. Some write of how little use the person of Christ is in religion; none, but to declare the doctrine of the Gospel to us. Consider the *preaching* and talk of men. You

* *Discourse concerning the Resurrection of Jesus Christ*, Preface, pag. 13, 14.

have much preaching and discourse about virtue and vice: So it was among the philosophers of old; but *Jesus Christ is laid aside*, quite as a thing forgotten, as if he was of no use, no consideration in religion; as if men knew not at all how to make any use of him, as to living to God. This being the general plague, as is evident, of the apostacy of the day wherein we live, if we are wise we shall consider very carefully, whether we ourselves are not influenced, more or less, with it; as where there is a general temptation, it doth, more or less, try all men, the best of believers, and prevail, more or less, upon their spirits. " *

At another time, " It is known with what subtilty and urgency his divine nature and person are opposed by the *Socinians*. What an *accession* is made daily unto their incredulity, what inclination of mind *multitudes* do manifest towards their pernicious ways, are also evident unto all who have any concernment in or for religion--Many who expressly deny not his *divine person*, yet seem to grow weary of any concernment therein. A *natural* religion, or none at all, pleases them better than faith in God by Jesus Christ. That any thing more is necessary in religion, but what *natural light* will discover and conduct us in, with the *moral* duties of righteousness and honesty which it directs unto, there are *too many* that will not acknowledge. What is beyond the line of nature and reason, is rejected as unintelligible mysteries or follies. The *person* and *grace* of Christ are supposed to breed all the disturbance in religion.—There are some who have so ordered the frame of objective religion, as that it is

* Volume of sermons, pag. 546. published and recommended by several ministers in the year 1721.

very uncertain, whether they leave any place for the person of Christ in it or no.—There are *not a few* who pretend high unto religion and devotion, who declare no erroneous conceptions about the doctrine of the *person of Christ*, who yet manifest themselves not to have that regard unto him, which the Gospel prescribes and requires. Hence have we so *many* discourses published about religion, the practical holiness and duties of obedience, written with great elegance of stile, and seriousness in argument, wherein we can meet with *little or nothing* wherein Jesus Christ, his office or his grace are concerned. Yea it is odds, but in them all, we shall meet with some *reflections* on those who judge them to be the life and center of our religion. The things of Christ beyond the example of his conversation on the earth, are of no use with such persons unto the promotion of piety and Gospel obedience. Concerning *many* books of this nature, we may say what a learned person did of one of old; there were in it many things laudable and delectable, *Sed nomen Jesu non erat ibi.* * Again, “When men begin to satisfy themselves with general hopes of mercy in God, without a continual respect unto the interposition and mediation of Christ, whereinto their hope and trust is resolved, there is a decay in their faith, and proportionably in all other *evangelical* graces also. Herein lies the mystery of Christian religion, which *the world seems to be almost weary of.*” †.

In another book he says, “*Never* was there an age since the name of Christians was known

* *Person of Christ*, pag. 19, 20.

† *Ibid.* pag. 157, 158.

upon the earth, wherein there was such a direct opposition made unto the *person and glory of Christ*, as there is in that wherein we live. ---- Yea, the disbelief of the mysteries of the *Trinity*; and the *incarnation of the Son of God*, the sole foundation of Christian religion, is so *diffused* in the world, as that it hath almost devoured the *power and vitals* of it. And not a few, who dare not yet express their minds, do give broad intimations of their intentions and good-will towards him, in making them the object of their *scorn and reproach*, who desire to know nothing but him, and him crucified." † And speaking of *the glory of Christ* he says, "Of all the evils which I have seen in the days of my pilgrimage now drawing to their close, there is none so grievous as the *publick contempt* of the principal mysteries of the Gospel, among them that are called *Christians*." ‡ 'Tis needless to add more which might be found in almost all the *Doctor's* writings.

Mr. *Howe*, whom Mr. *Chandler* himself owns to have been a *person eminent for his great piety, learning, and moderation*,* expressing his awful thoughts of the state of things amongst us, says, "What does it portend when, amidst the clear light of the Gospel, that affords so bright a discovery of the *glorious Redeemer*, and of all his apt methods for bringing to full effect his mighty work of redemption, an *open war* is commenced against *him*, and his whole design, by persons, *under seal*, devoted to him! If there were but one single instance hereof in an age, who would not with trembling expect the issue?"

† *Meditations and discourses on the glory of Christ*, pag. 4, 5.

‡ *Ibid.* pag. 87.

* *Dedication of Mr. Howe's works to the King*, vol. I.

But when the *genius* of a *Christian nation* seems, in the rising generation, to be leading to a *general apostacy, from Christianity*, in its principal and most substantial parts; when the juvenile wit and courage, which are thought to belong to a gentleman, entering upon the stage of the world, are employed in satyrizing upon the religion, into which they have been baptized, in bold efforts against the *Lord that bought them!* Whither doth this tend?" † At another time, "What a cloudy, wavering, uncertain, lank, spiritless thing is the *faith of Christians* in this age become! How little are the ascertaining grounds of it understood, or endeavoured to be understood! *Most* content themselves to profess it only as the religion of their country, and which was delivered to them by their fore-fathers, and so are Christians but upon the same terms as other nations are *Mahometans*, or more gross *Pagans*, as a *worthy writer* some time since took notice. How few make it their business to see things with their own eyes, to believe, and be sure that *Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God!* How far are we from the riches of the full assurance of understanding! How little practical and governing is the faith of the *most!* How little doth it import of an acknowledgment of the *mystery of God, viz. of the Father, and of Christ!* How little effectual is it! which it can be but in proportion to the grounds upon which it rests. — We shall have abundant consolation in our own souls, if we can acquit ourselves as to these things, that we lamented the decay and loss, and endeavoured the restitution of them, and therein, as much as in us was, of the *Christian interest.*" ‡

† *Howe's works*, vol. 2. pag. 98.

‡ *Ibid.* pag. 246, 247.

In one of his posthumous works he says, "It is manifest what *multitudes* of souls are ensnared unto perdition, even by the shame and reproach and fear of men, that religion hath been assaulted with in many ages, but *never more* than in our own."* And, "When we consider how it (the world) is *generally* sunk in Atheism and oblivion of God, drenched in wickedness; and even that part of it that is called *Christian*, how little it is better than the rest. The great doctrines of the Christian religion, the incarnation, the death, the resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ, the future judgment, and the eternal states of men, all become even as antiquated things!" † In another place, "Was there *ever an age* wherein the Spirit was more grieved, more striven against? Wherein God should have more cause and reason to say, *My Spirit shall not strive with you?*" ‡ Again, "Alas with *too many* there is scarce life enough left to feel themselves die, or light enough to perceive that darkness is gathering upon them. Strange, that men should be dying, and say they are alive! Light is diminishing, and blindness increasing and growing upon them, yet they say they see well, and carry it as if nothing ailed them! This is a strange insatiation upon the minds of men, even of the professors of religion in our time." § Once more, "The Christian religion is in great part become *Paganish*. — How plain is it that Christianity has let in *Paganism* unto a dreadful degree!" *

In another of his posthumous works, having put the question, *Is there no deliverer, no one to*

* *Prosperous state of the Christian interest, &c.* published by Dr. Evans, pag. 51.

† Ibid. 99.

‡ Ibid. 146.

§ Ibid. pag. 276.

* Ibid. pag. 281.

undertake—to repair the ruins of perishing flesh, and restore the life of God among men, who were alienated from the life of God? He goes on, “But alas, instead of such solicitous enquiries, it appears we are fallen into an age, wherein some deny, and others deride, and most utterly disregard the operations of the blessed and glorious Spirit of God, for such purposes. There are multitudes to whom the mention of such a thing is matter of laughter: What, to have the Spirit! for men to talk of having the Spirit!—And there are a great many more, we have reason to suppose, who do as little concern themselves, whether they ever are the subjects of such operations of this Spirit, as if they were yet to learn, or had never heard, whether there were any Holy Ghost, as is said concerning some, Acts xix. 2.”† Again, “There is not a religion living amongst us, which is God-wrought, whereunto we can entitle him as the author of it. It was therefore necessary to insist, as we have done, in letting you understand what dependance we must have upon an immediate influence, as to every good work, which leaves not our spirits undetermined, or at loose, but, they being averse to every thing of that kind, overflows them thereinto. It was necessary, I say, that the truth of this matter should be held forth to us, because I am very much persuaded, that this is the great worm at the root of religion this day: Faith in the eternal Spirit is not acted to draw forth that life and influence which would make our religion a living, active thing, and hold it forth lovely and beautiful in the eyes of the world. Therefore it is that we are such languishing creatures as to the business

† *The office and work of the Holy Spirit, &c. published by T. Harris and Dr. Evans, pag. 4, 5.*

of religion, and as to all spiritual actions, because it is not enough understood that all these works must be wrought in us and for us. For if that were understood, we should not be so self-confident as we are, when we go to duties, &c." ‡

We will now proceed to Dr. *Watts*, whose spirit and way of expression on this subject Mr. *Chandler* himself has recommended. In the preface I am particularly referred to, he says, "It hath been justly observed, that where a great and *universal* neglect of *preaching Christ* hath prevailed in a Christian nation, it hath given a fatal occasion to the growth of *Deism* and *Infidelity*; for when persons have heard the sermons of their clergy for many years together, and find little of *Christ* in them, they have taken it into their heads, that men may be very good, and go safe to heaven without *Christianity*; and therefore, tho' they dwell in a land where the Gospel is professed, they imagine there's no need they should be *Christians*. But what a blot and reproach would it be to our ministry, if *infidels* and *heathens* should multiply among us, thro' such a woful neglect of preaching the *peculiar doctrines of Christ*? Besides, let us consider how *little* hath been our *success* in comparison of the *multitudes* converted by our fathers in the day of their ministry. Hath not this been matter of sore complaint these many years past? Now it is worth our enquiry, whether it may not be ascribed to the *absence of Christ* in our sermons. And what reason indeed can we have to expect the presence and influence of the *Spirit of Christ*, if we leave his person, his offices, his grace, and his Gospel out of our discourses, or give but a slight and casual hint at these glorious subjects,

‡ *The office and work of the Holy Spirit, &c.* pag. 291.

which

which ought to be our daily theme?" † And "Have we not been too often tempted to follow the *modish* way, and speak to our hearers in general terms, as tho' they were all converted already, and sufficiently made Christians by a national profession?" *

In others of his writings he says, "I cannot invite the *loose* and *fashionable* part of mankind, the *young Censors* of the age, and the *deriders* of the *ministry*, to become my readers: Too many of them grow weary of Christianity, and look back upon *heathenism* with a wishful eye, as the *Jews* did of old upon the *leeks and onions* of *Egypt*, when they grew angry with *Moses*, and began to loath the *bread of heaven*. These persons will find but little here that suits their taste, for I have not entertained you with *lectures of philosophy*, instead of the *Gospel of Christ*; nor have I affected that easy indolence of style which is the dry delight of some *modish* writers, the cold and insipid pleasure of men who pretend to politeness." ‡ In his sermons he says, "Infidelity is a growing weed, the contempt and ridicule of revealed religion flourish and become *fashionable* among the gay part of the world." §§ And "Among those who call themselves Christians, truly the *greatest part* have nothing of *Christianity* besides the mere name:" † At another time he says, "This is an age wherein the Gospel of our Redeemer meets with *much* contempt and opposition. There are *many* in a baptized nation, and who have been brought up in the Christian belief and worship, that *begin to be weary of Christ and his religion*." And, "There are *many* in our

† Preface to Mr. Jennings's discourses of Preaching Christ, &c. pag. 6, 7.

* Ibid. pag. 9.

‡ Sermons on various subjects, Vol. 1. Dedication, pag. 6.

§§ Sermons, Vol. 1. pag. 4.

† Ibid. pag. 432.

age and nation arrived at this height of pride, and contempt of the Gospel, viz. as to *ridicule* it."† And in another of his books he says, "Perhaps in this *dangerous age* you may have met with some allurements to infidelity, or your younger friends may meet with them. *Satan* hath *many* busy emissaries, *many* subtle agents who with fair words entice the souls of men away from the Gospel of *Christ*. Or perhaps you may have been attacked by the scoffs of wanton companions, and it may be, some of their impious cavils have hung about your imaginations, made too deep an impression upon your spirits, and entangled your thoughts with some of the artifices of infidelity. Oh, take heed of these dangerous snares, as you love your own souls; and let young Christians be warned against them betimes!— And may the following directions or advices by the divine blessing become effectual *preservatives* to your souls, against the danger and mischief of infidelity, which is a *growing evil*, and a *spreading plague* of the age wherein we live."*

To add no more from the Doctor, having shewn *how divine love will influence all the other affections of the heart*, one of his reflections is, "If mankind be examined by this rule, how *few* sincere lovers of God will be found among them! —Alas! how *few* are there, whose love to God doth not fall under some just suspicion, when brought to this test!" &c. Again, "O when shall the time be, that *they which fear the Lord* shall *speak often one to another*, and warm each others hearts with heavenly conversation? When shall the blessed Spirit *revisit the forsaken churches*, and *dwell again in the degenerate families of Christians*?" †

† *Sermons on various subjects*, Vol. 2. pag. 2, 36.

* *Caveat against infidelity*, pag. 135, &c.

† *Discourses of the Love of God*, &c. pag. 148, 299.

I shall next produce some passages from Mr. Jennings's discourses, prefaced by Dr. Watts, who says concerning them, "I have not observ'd any thing in them that can justly give disgust, or awaken any reasonable resentment." * Several things have already been cited from these discourses, to which I shall only add what follows. "Why, says he, should not we introduce the peculiarities of the Gospel on all occasions, as frequently as the Apostles did? If our schemes of Theology will not allow us, we have reason to suspect we are in a different scheme from the Apostles. Are we afraid men will make perverse use of such doctrines as the Apostles used for motives? The Apostles chose to venture it, and why should not we? If we will not dare to preach such a Gospel, as may be perverted by men of corrupt minds, to their own injury, we must not expect to be instruments of any good: If we'll be the *savour of life* to some, we must expect to be the *savour of death* to others, or not preach at all.

I confess even the *Remonstrant* scheme (which, I think, considerably sinks the doctrines of grace) does allow room to regard *Christ* abundantly more than *most* preachers of that set do: I would meet them on their own principles: What hinders their frequently inculcating the merits of *Christ*, the depravity of our natures, the necessity of regeneration, the aids of grace and union, and communion with *Christ*? These topicks, it were to be hoped, might have their effect: But alas! how *few* of the *Remonstrants* improve to advantage so much of the Gospel as they hold and receive; and it makes me less inclined to this scheme, that it so *generally* draws those that embrace it into a strain of preaching, even on prac-

* Preface to the discourses, pag. 6.

tical subjects, so different from that of the Apostles; and inclines them, I know not how, to suppress those glorious evangelical motives (which yet their own principles might allow) by which the Apostles enforced Gospel duties."*

The late Mr. *Smith* carries this point still farther, and says, "It were easy to shew, how the *Remonstrant* hath betrayed the truth to the *Socinian*, and the *Socinian* to the *Deist*; and at last, under pretence of *free-thinking*, all both *natural* and *revealed religion* have been ridiculed and exposed, and the stream of error, by many windings, run into the black-sea of *Atheism* and *Infidelity*. *Obsta principiis.*"†

My next author shall be Dr. *Harris*, who not only says, "There is reason to be sensible of the great decay of practical godliness *every where*; and that the last age, tho' plainer, and less polite, was more remarkable for zeal in religion, and simplicity of manners." But he likewise adds, that "He is sensible he has taken the *unfashionable* side of the question, in the turn he has given the subject, (*viz.* of persons giving themselves to the Lord.) The excellence and authority of the Lord Jesus runs low in the accounts of *many*; but so does the authority of the Scriptures too: And he shall never wonder to find them meet with the like treatment, and share an equal fate."† And in his Funeral Sermon for Mr. *Harvey* he tells us, "He (Mr. *Harvey*) had great apprehensions of the mediation of Christ, and the standing influences of the Divine Spirit, as the grand peculiarities of the Christian dispensation; and feared that the want of due regard to them was one

* *Discourses on Preaching Christ*, &c. pag. 25, 26.

† *Sermon preach'd at the ordination of Mr. Samuel Clarke*, in St. Albans, pag. 42.

† *Self-dedication*, Preface, pag. 4, 6, 7, 8.

great reason of the *languishing state* of the Christian interest amongst us, and the frequent revolts from it." * And as to *his* character, the Doctor says of him, that "He was truly a primitive catholic, who loved and owned all sincere Christians, and was of no one party exclusive of all the rest." And, "He never knew any young minister of so serious a spirit, and so earnestly set for doing good." †

Mr. *John Reynolds* says, "If we may yet fear *Popish* assaults abroad, what shall we say to *Deism* and Infidelity at home? O what a prophane, unbelieving spirit is *gone out* amongst us! The oracles of God are *inwardly* discredited, *openly* scorned and refused. A *Deistical* spirit, and contempt egregious of the person and authority of the Lord Jesus, makes a dangerous assault, against his church, and the faith once delivered to his Saints. Defections from and rejections of the Christian truth and religion, I fear, are sadly *numerous*."

Mr. *Tong*, in a Funeral Sermon occasioned by the death of Mr. *Slater*, speaking of him, says, "The death of such persons makes a wide gap and breach upon our hedge, and opens a way for a deluge of sin and misery, especially if there should be but *few* found to stand in the gap. The generation of good men, ministers and others, that are gone, and going off the stage, had, *generally* speaking, a very excellent spirit; there are so very *few* of them left, that I hope none can suspect me to be guilty of flattery in what I say of them. — As for these our *Fathers*, *where are they*? Most of them gone, and the rest a go-

* *A Funeral Sermon for Mr. Harvey*, pag. 39.

† *Ibid.* pag. 40, 41.

‡ *Confirming Catechism, Preface*, pag. 3.

ing. The church of God in our days has but too much cause to take up that lamentation in the 7th Micah, 1. ver. *Woe is me! For I am as when they have gathered the summer fruits, as the grape gleanings of the vintage, and my soul desired the first ripe fruit, the good man is perished from the earth, &c.** Again, "We are told by those of a different persuasion, that we mightily fall short of the piety and humility of our predecessors. I could here mention both the author and the book, in which the world is told, that the dissenting congregations cannot continue long, if the publick ministers will but take care to be diligent in their work, and exemplary in their conversations: For, says he, *It was the sobriety and sanctimony of the old Puritans, that drew a great many well-minded men to their party, who understood nothing of the merits of the cause. But their present ministers have very little of that kind to recommend them to the world; they are generally grown as remiss and vain as others.* The author I refer to is one of great fame for moderation, and one that we are loth to believe is a real enemy to any sober sort of dissenting Protestants; but if it were an enemy, *fas est & ab hoste doceri.* It concerns us all to take the matter to heart, and to enquire what we have done to forfeit the reputation that those had gained, who have gone before us; and instead of recriminating, and telling our accusers, that this was the way and practice of the *Pharisees* to praise the dead Saints, and persecute the living: It would be much more wise and becoming in us, to double our diligence and our watchfulness." † Once more, "What is become of the zeal, the charity, the humility,

* *Funeral Sermon for Mr. Slater, pag. 17, 18.*

† *Ibid. pag. 22, 23.*

the spirit of prayer, that the generation of Christians, now going off the stage, has been so much celebrated for? Certainly, that good spirit is in a *great measure gone*, and oh! Sirs, fetch it back again! It is a free spirit, and would return and visit us, and dwell with us, if we would stir up ourselves to take hold of it; it is not yet so far gone from ministers and others, but it may be recovered." †

I shall close these quotations with one from Mr. Bennet, whose words are as follow, "I need not inform the intelligent reader that a *great many* divines of considerable name and character, and who press the duties of the Christian religion with much strength and clearness of argument, strangely overlook the help of the Spirit: And notwithstanding the Gospel is so full of it, very much leave it out of their writings, or at least satisfy themselves with now and then a general hint, *that this is what every good man may expect*. Indeed they rather seem to take it for granted, that all have the help of the Spirit, than to direct persons to look for his help, or how they may obtain it; as if it was a thing afforded in course, and in a general imperceptible way, and attended with no evidence to the mind; and that consequently enquiries about it are needless. How much of this strain occurs in sermons and books, is known." And a little after, having quoted a passage from Dr. Gale's sermons on *Mat. 5. 48.* he adds, "Here is not the least mention of God's help; and indeed it is but *rarely* that is taken notice of by writers of *this stamp*. The reason of which I apprehend to be, not that they deny all supernatural assistance in religion, and all concurrence of

† *Ibid.* pag. 25.

God's Spirit; but they take it for granted every man has this, and consequently we are concerned only to exert our own powers without troubling ourselves about power from on high." *

I had some thoughts of adding a few citations from foreign divines; but as the work has already run too great a length, I shall only give one specimen from *Hermannus Witsius*, whose writings are adorned with a happy mixture of piety and learning. In a valedictory oration, to the university at *Utrecht*, concerning the state of learning, he says, among other things, "*Christian* religion, being stripped of all its mysteries, is changed into a merely natural and rational worship of the Deity, if it may be stiled worship. Who doubts but all these things are formed for the destruction of all religion, the extirpation of piety and holiness, and beguiling us of salvation? And yet it is impossible to say how many, who affect a character for a critical, free and polite sort of knowledge, are ensnared with them. But these things are the more threatening because the infection is so complicated, that no proper and effectual remedies can be found to give a check to it. God, even God himself must interpose, that, if we are not wholly corrupted, he may preserve us from the contagion; may put a stop to the spreading pestilence, and mercifully avert the utter ruin that hangs over our heads: For what hope of deliverance is there now at length from men?" He goes on in a very earnest address to "ministers, to set themselves against these things with united light and fervour, prudence and zeal, meekness and courage; and with a hearty concern for the glory of God, the patronage of truth, the study of peace,

* *Christian Oratory*, pag. 370, 371. marginal note.

and the common salvation : But expresses his fears with grief, that such a spirit among them is rather to be wished than hoped for; unless God should exceed their hopes in the present desperate state of things." *

I could add many more, and some of no small repute, that express their sense of these things in terms so very strong, that I rather chuse to pass them by, than to recite them. These already mention'd shall suffice to shew, that very valuable men of several denominations have delivered their sense of these and such like things, as much, or more, in what Mr. Chandler calls

* *Ipsa denique religio Christiana, mysteriis suis omnibus exuta, in mere naturalem & rationalem numinis cultum, si modo numinis cultum, convertitur. Quis dubitat, auditores, quin ad totius religionis internecionem, ad pietatis ac sanctimonie extirpationem, ad salutis nostræ interversionem, comparata sint hæc omnia? Quibus tamen dici non potest quam multi capiantur, qui rarioris, liberæ ac generosæ cujusdam sapientiæ nomen affectant. Eo autem periculosiora sunt, quod tot simul pestibus compescendis nulla usquam idonea & efficacia satis inveniantur remedia. Deum, ipsum Deum intervenire oportet, ut, si quid adhuc integrum superest, a lue præservet, grassantis pestilentie impetum sistat, impendentemque capitibus nostris supremam necessitatem propitius averruncet. Ab hominibus enim quæ tandem spes salutis restat? Ea, si non aliunde, a THEOLOGORUM saltem ordine expectanda foret. Hos decebat junctis animis, manibus, armis, ad laborantis causæ tutelam, quasi ad ararum focorumque defensionem, concurrere. Et ad eum modum pro sacris, custodiæ suæ concreditis, pugnare, ut non minora lucis quam fervoris, prudentiæ quam zeli, mansuetudinis quam fortitudinis exempla ederent. Ut denique non suos sibi triumphos, sed Dei gloriam, veritatis patrocinium, pacis studium, communisque salutis promotionem cordi esse, omnibus curis, consiliis, actionibus suis, palam facerent. — Cæterum hæc quæ calidis optamus suspiriis, quorumque ardentissimo desiderio languidi fatiscimus voti, prob! dolor, voti magis quam spei sunt: nisi quæ spes quandoque nostras transcendere amat Dei Optimi Maximique benignitas, nec opinantibus nobis, desperatis conclamatisque rebus succurrat. Miscellaneorum sacrorum Tomus alter. p. 949. 950.*

the uncharitable way, than I have. I never heard them censured for any of these, or other expressions of the same sort; and the world will judge of the justice and friendship of all your repeated complaints against me, for only treading in some of the easiest of their steps. However, I have a greater testimony than that of any fallible men, to countenance my way of speaking about these things: A testimony that, I hope, can't be suspected of *uncharitableness*; I mean that of the Apostle Paul, who in one place, having spoke of *making manifest the savour of the know-* ^{2 Cor. 2.} *ledge of Christ* in preaching him, says, *we are* ^{14. 17.} *not as many which corrupt the word of God; but as of sincerity, but as of God, in the sight of God speak we in Christ.* And in another place, speaking again of *ministers*, he says, *all seek their own,* ^{Phil. 2.} *not the things which are Jesus Christ's.* An ex- ^{21.} *pression much stronger and more severe than any I have used.*

Thus, Sir, I think I have gone thro' every thing that can be expected, or reasonably desired to come under my notice in your letter of remarks: And I assure you I have not designedly slipt over any difficulties, or any thing of importance; nor gone any farther in my observations, than I apprehended there was just occasion for them, and humbly hoped that, by a divine influence, they might answer some valuable ends, inclusive of your own advantage. It is now time to draw toward a conclusion; and though this answer has filled many more pages than I at first expected; yet it may not be amiss to add a few thoughts for a close of the whole.

The CONCLUSION.

A serious review of the unhappy tendency of your letter fills me with awful and affecting thoughts of the dismal case it would bring us to. If such pains must be taken to establish a notion of preaching Christ, and countenance a way of preaching, that takes little or no notice of him; and if such loud outcries must be raised against apprehensions and warnings of visible decays in our regards to him, and against attempts to awaken solemn reflections upon them in our own and others souls: If they must not be mentioned, not lamented, nor guarded against; if we must not be allowed to say that we are in any danger of them, and must not be excited to take heed of them, or to turn inwards and see whether, or how far we are gone into them, What reasonable hope can we have of an alteration for the better? Is this the way to reform them? or rather is it not the way to shelter and encourage them? What can be reasonably expected from it, but to dispose every one to rest contented where he is, without endeavouring to advance in spreading the glory of our great and dear Redeemer; if not to carry them off still more and more from it? And what effect is it like to have, in proportion to its prevalence, but to stifle all concern about a recovery; and to make them please themselves in their neglects, and think it best to take little notice of him? Would not this bring us into a state too much like that of the church of *Laodicea*, which lay under Christ's rebukes, and were in the nearest danger of being *spued out of his mouth*? But oh how much happier would it be, if his counsel to them might be acceptable to us! *Because*
ibon

thou say'st, I am rich, and increased with goods, ^{Rev. 3.}
and have need of nothing; and knowest not that ^{17, 18.}
thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and
blind, and naked. I counsel thee to buy of me
gold tried in the fire, that thou may'st be rich; and
white raiment that thou may'st be clothed, and that
the shame of thy nakedness do not appear; and
anoint thine eyes with eye-salve, that thou may'st see.

Mr. Howe very well says, "What rational
design can a man form to himself——by pre-
tending to be what——he is not? (1.) It is
plain he can never deceive God.——(2.) He will
highly provoke him, even by an attempt of
it.——(3.) By this attempt to impose up-
on the blessed God by false appearances, we
bring in very pregnant convictive testimony
against our own souls.——(4.) We hereby lose
the opportunity, which we might otherwise have
had, of becoming what we seemed to be. The
moralist speaks about the business of wisdom,
*Multi ad sapientiam pervenissent, nisi se ad sapien-
tiam pervenisse putarant.* Many had attained to
be wise, had they not thought themselves to
be already so. If they had not couzened them-
selves with the appearance of it, many might
have come to have been sincere. And it is a
miserable thing to please one's self with the sha-
dow, all that time wherein one should have been
getting the substance, till the time is expired and
gone."* Would not insensibility, Sir, be the most
dangerous symptom of our disease? Or have
we no disease upon our regards to Christ, to be
sensible of? Sure we are not, generally speaking,
got so high in them, as not to need further
quickenings, or as not to leave room for com-
plaints: And if we are not, must we let things go

* *The Office and Work of the Holy Spirit, &c.* p. 141--144.

on, and wipe our mouths, and say we are innocent, till we gradually may become the greatest strangers to him that ever were known in the Christian world? Or ought we not to endeavour, before it be too late, to recover a sensibility of the distemper in order to a cure?

I beseech you then, Sir, to consider, as in the sight and presence of God, what you are doing; and what your attempt, if it should succeed, is like to issue in. And whether, if it should be a means of hindering any from preaching Christ, or of countenancing them in their neglects that way, it would stand well in your accounts in the day of judgment? What have I pleaded for, and what have I expressed my concern about the neglects of, but preaching Christ in the whole compass of his characters, and preaching on Christian morality with a reference to him? I have not separated Christian privileges and duties, principles and practice; but insisted that they be both inculcated in their proper place and order; and why should you do any thing to break in upon their connection? I have indeed urged the practice of all duties with a reference to Christ, which I take to be the only true and effectual way of supporting them; and why should you, who can't, with a good face, say the contrary, attempt to justify the preaching of them, as if it were preaching Christ, though he be not named in them, and they be not referred to him, so as the hearers may discern the reference? What end can be answered by your scheme for promoting the honour of Christ, and the interest of real religion in heart and life, that is not answered with more advantage by mine? Why then should you so vehemently set yourself against my way of aiming at these truly noble designs upon the plan
of

of Gospel revelation? Mr. Jennings speaking of the religion of Jesus says, "In all the peculiar glories of this religion, *Christ* is interwoven, like *Phidias's* name in the shield, which could not be effaced without destroying the shield it self. The doctrines concerning *Jesus* make the glory and advantage of his religion; and so run through the whole, that *preaching Christ*, and *preaching the Gospel*, are, in Scripture stile, synonymous terms: as in 1 Cor. i. 23.—ii. 2. and innumerable other places. The *preaching of Christ* is our business, our charge, and our glory; but oh! *who is sufficient for these things.*" † And "Does not our chearful progress in our work depend on a divine *Afflatus*, and the Spirit dispensed by *Christ*? But if we take no notice of him in our preaching, and do not distinguish ourselves from the moral philosophers of the *Gentiles*, how can we expect any more of this enliv'ning and encouraging presence of *Christ* than they had? nay, we have less ground to expect it, if we wilfully slight and slur so noble a revelation, which they were never favoured withal." *

While I contend for the indispensable necessity of religious and moral duties, in all good conscience toward God and man, and for all diligence in the pursuit of them; while I endeavour to impress the deepest sense of our own insufficiency and unworthiness, in order to our having a more hopeful and entire dependence upon *Christ*, for all grace to enable us to perform them, and for all recommendations of ourselves and them to God, Can there be any crime or danger in referring them this way too

† *Discourses on preaching Christ, &c.* pag. 12.

* *Ibid.* pag. 21.

much to him? Or in bringing his glory, his authority, and his love to us; and our faith in him, love and obligations to him, and hope of eternal life, as the free gift of God through him, too much into the arguments and motives to enforce them? Or in giving him too great a share in the honour of them? For my own part, I am determined, by his help, to venture this at the bar of God. I am in no pain about a charge there, that I interested Christ too much in them, while I find that the more I do it, the more the nerves of my obedience are strengthened by it. But I should be terribly afraid to appear there, under an abatement of any of these, or such like regards to him; because, for what I know, it may be construed, in that revealing day, as a criminal neglect of him under Gospel-light, and an assuming to myself some part of the glory that ought to have been entirely reserv'd to him.

But I know a great part of your pretence is, that what I have said is uncharitable to my brethren, and a reproach upon their characters. I hope I have sufficiently shewn the contrary. But is no such thing to be allowed of as godly jealousy, made up of brotherly love, holy fear, and a sincere concern for the glory of God, where one thinks he hath evident ground for it? The Apostle who, as far as we know, proceeded only upon what appeared among the *Corinthians*, was

2 Cor. 11. *jealous over them with godly jealousy — that*
 2. 3. *he might present them as a chaste virgin to Christ.*
And he fear'd lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtilty, so their minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ. Now, though I don't pretend to apostolick authority, or to any authority at all over my brethren, or over any one whatsoever, it is honour enough for me to be their brother,

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and companion in tribulation, and in the kingdom Rev. 1. 9.
and patience of Jesus Christ: Yet I should think the Apostle's *temper* ought to have some place in every faithful minister of Christ, according as they apprehend there are occasions for it. Must all their zeal be spent for their brethren, and none be left for their great Lord, whose servants they are? Must all tenderness be due only to their characters, and none to his? Must their honour be supported upon the ruins of his? Must charity to them be maintained, at the expence of duty to him? Must a random charge, as you call it, that pointed at none, and could affect none but the guilty that come in its way, be thought a more criminal thing, than their contempt or neglect it which falls upon a determinate object, even upon our blessed Lord and Saviour, who is infinitely more excellent and worthy than us all? Must complaints of not making him our governing aim in our holy ministrations, be inconsistent with charity to those, whoever they are, that have been more or less chargeable with it? Or rather is it not real charity to them, and to the age in general, as well as duty to Christ, to endeavour with all good will to awaken in them, as well as in myself, a humbling sense of our defects, and to quicken us to our duty for time to come?

I hope I have as tender a disposition toward the characters of my brethren, as any of them have toward mine; and would humbly lament all the defects of charity, as well as of other graces, in myself or others. But are any that preach Christ concerned in the charge, that you say I bring against them? Or can any think himself, or be thought by others to be concerned in it, or be offended at it, if his practice proves, or he knows, and his hearers know that he preaches Christ? Who then can this charge,

as you call it, affect? Why truly, not one that preaches him. Who then is all this concern for? Why, only for those that don't preach him. And I am sorry so much time and pains must be spent, and such an excess of displeasure must be shewn, only to countenance their neglects, and to plead for them, as if they did what they do not, but ought to do; and by their not doing it, the honour of Christ and his religion must unavoidably suffer in the world. The contention would surely be much happier, if it were for preaching Christ more, rather than for excusing such as hardly preach him at all.

But, perhaps, the bottom of all lies here, that I have advanced and recommended such a notion of preaching Christ, as you have the strongest prejudices against; I own it appears somewhat likely to me that this is, in part at least, the truth of the case: But if my notion is the *Scripture-notion* of preaching him, as I hope I have shewn it is, then all that you have been doing is really, though not designedly, fighting against him. You don't pretend that he is generally preached, according to my notion of what it is to preach him; and all that I said about the few that preach him was only relative to that notion of it: If therefore I am right, in what it is to preach Christ; I am, for any thing you have said to the contrary, right, in what you call my charge upon my brethren. And if you think I am mistaken in my notion of preaching Christ, methinks I am pretty unmercifully used only for what you suppose to be a mistake, and for saying in consequence of it, and relative to it, what Mr. *Chandler* himself would not scruple to say, viz. that there are but few that so preach him. Is not this very charitable to treat me in such a manner as you do, on the supposition of a meer mistake?

mistake? But as I am persuaded that the *Scripture* is on my side, at least as to the main of my notion about preaching Christ, and am sure I was not governed by an uncharitable temper, that takes pleasure in reflecting upon any of my brethren; so nothing could be a greater joy to me than to find my self more mistaken, than I fear I am, about the comparatively few, that make him the principal subject and governing view of their ministry: And if it shall please God so far to honour what has passed between us, as to make it a happy means of engaging you and me, or any others of our Christian brethren, to preach Christ, inclusive of all the duties of Christianity with a proper reference to him, more than we have hitherto done, I shall reckon it a glory that all the reproaches you have cast upon me are not worthy to be compared with: My end is answered; and I shall *glorify God on this behalf.*

If any thing in this answer offends you, I desire you would be so just to my brethren, as not to let them bear any part of your resentment. You may be satisfied there is no ground for it. But as I have reason to believe, it hath been already whisper'd, and probably would hereafter be more openly talk'd abroad, as if it were written in concert with others, I take this opportunity to declare, that all such reports are false. It is with reluctance and self-displicency that I mention this. I hope I can truly say it don't proceed from a vain glorious temper of mind, which I take to be one of the greatest blemishes of human nature: And, as I don't believe there is any thing worthy in this performance, to gratify an inclination that way; so I should not have said one word of this nature, had it not been for the reason abovementioned. And for a like reason,
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The Conclusion.

it may be proper to add, that I have had no concern in any other publick remark, that may have been made upon your letter.

When I found myself reduced to a necessity of entring upon this work, and therein of attempting further to clear and vindicate the *Scripture-notion* of preaching Christ, I trust, I began, carried on, and finished it, in his name and fear. And now to his honour I sincerely devote it; in his hands I leave it; to his blessing I recommend it, for the joint advancement of truth and charity, and all the parts of Gospel-holiness; upon him I humbly depend to succeed it, and through him I look for all forgiveness of every thing that may be amiss in it. And as for you, whatever wrong you have done me, the Lord lay it not to your charge.

I am, in all Christian service, Reverend Sir,

London, Dec. 1.
1729.

Yours, &c.

JOHN GUYSE.

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